

2. No. 7.  
AUTUMN  
1933

# SIGHT AND SOUND

A REVIEW *of* MODERN AIDS *to* LEARNING

## ARTICLES ON

THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE AND E.M.B. FILMS  
by Sir William Furse

MUSIC AND THE SYNCHRONISED FILM  
by Clarence Raybould

SYNTHETIC SOUND  
by Paul Popper

LANGUAGE AND FILM  
by Dr. J. B. C. Grundy

TEACHING HISTORY BY FILM  
by F. Wilkinson

NEWSREEL  
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THE FILM IN VETERINARY TRAINING  
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by T. L. Macdonald

Notes of the Quarter : Instruction in Cinematography :  
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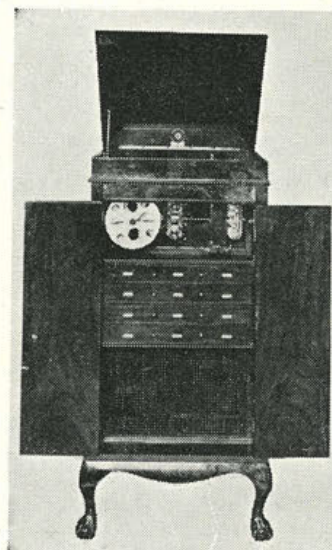
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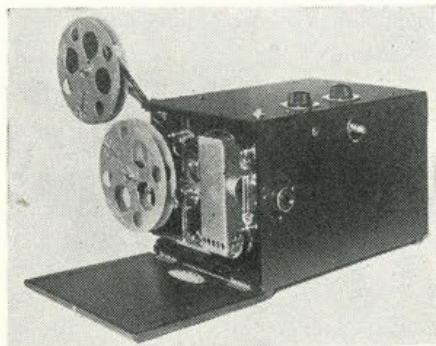
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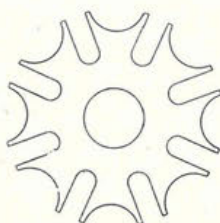
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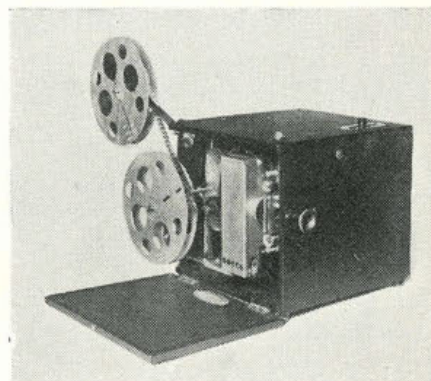
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## A QUARTERLY REVIEW OF MODERN AIDS TO LEARNING PUBLISHED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF ADULT EDUCATION

VOLUME 2, No. 7

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### TASKS BEFORE THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

A MONTH ago, in September, the Governors of the new British Film Institute held their first meeting, the formalities connected with its registration having been completed, and the Board of Trade satisfied as to its constitution and aims. The full list of the Governors, as completed at this meeting, is now as follows: *For the Trade*, Mr. C. M. Woolf (Gaumont-British Picture Corporation), Mr. Thomas Ormiston, M.P. (Treasurer, Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association) and Mr. F. W. Baker (Kinematograph Renters Society); *For Education*, Sir Charles Cleland (Chairman, Glasgow Education Authority), Mr. A. C. Cameron (Secretary, Oxford Education Committee), and Mr. R. S. Lambert (Editor, "The Listener");

*For the General Public*, Lady Levita, Mr. John Buchan, M.P., and Mr. J. J. Lawson, M.P. These nine Governors have yet to choose a Chairman, but it is understood that a well-known public man has been approached and offered the position.

The British Film Institute, thus launched, starts life with a number of assets. Most important is the goodwill of the film trade, as officially expressed through the trade organisations; and this goodwill has taken practical shape in the form of advances of funds to enable the Institute to incur expenditure in anticipation of grants from the Cinematograph Fund, for which a formal application has now been made to the Privy Council. Furthermore, on the educational side





"THUNDER OVER MEXICO"

Symbolising militarism: carnival figure carried in Mexican Corpus Christi celebrations. Eisenstein's film is to be shown in America in an abridged form which has been prepared in accordance with the promoters' wishes and not according to the director's original plan



generous grants have been made by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees, the National Union of Teachers and the Educational Institute of Scotland to the Commission on Educational and Cultural Films, to be handed on to the Institute by the Commission on the latter's demise (which also occurred during September). Besides money, the Film Institute starts with an advantage in the form of enthusiasm, such as has taken shape in the movement to start Film Institute Societies in provincial centres (such as Liverpool, Rugby and Maidstone) for the purpose of co-operating closely with the Institute in London. As regards staff, the Institute has wisely contented itself with a modest number of appointments, but the choice of Mr. J. W. Brown (late of the British Institute of Adult Education, and formerly joint Secretary to the Commission on Educational and Cultural Films) as Manager, and Mr. R. V. Crow as Secretary, is certain to command the confidence on the one hand of education and on the other of the film trade in general.

These matters being wisely determined, then, the next point is—what immediate tasks is the Institute setting itself to undertake? Undoubtedly the most urgent is the provision of an adequate service, for the benefit of intelligent filmgoers throughout the country, of information and criticism of current films of cultural value. There is only one way in which a strong body of public opinion can be built up to support the showing of good films, and that is the giving of information as to what films are being released, what their quality is, and when and where the provincial filmgoer may be able to see them. It is likely that the Film Institute will lose no time in publishing some form of periodical in which films of value will be critically reviewed and perhaps classified according to their merit. Bound up with this is the need for a permanent critical catalogue of such films, upon the compiling of which work should commence without delay. If, in addition, the Institute is able to give early attention to the building up of a Film Library or Repository, to preserve current films of value

(e.g., newsreels) from the risk of passing out of circulation, an important step will have been taken towards making intelligent film-going easier than it is to-day.

When it turns to the work of directly promoting the cultural and educational influence of the film, the Institute will find itself faced with claims from many quarters. The part that the film can play in religion (in religious teaching, and even perhaps in some form of worship) is one; the adaptation, for educational uses, of industrial films, which though made primarily for advertisement, are often highly instructional as well, is another; a third is the encouragement of education authorities, schools and educational associations, to experiment more boldly with the film as a medium of teaching. We hope, too, that the Film Institute will take up the question of the use of films for recreational and educational purposes at centres for the welfare of the unemployed. Many of these tasks are of major importance and cannot be completed in a short time; but if a beginning is made, the enthusiasm behind the Film Institute movement will ensure that resources are forthcoming to carry them through.

To undertake these tasks, indeed, the Institute will require to enlist as many members as possible, both individuals and organisations, in London and the provinces. It will need to build up local societies or branches in all the principal towns, on a basis similar to that of the central body in London, that is, co-operation between the film trade (locally) and the interests representing enlightened public opinion. Wherever a small or large group of persons interested in this new movement are found, they can best help it on by forming themselves into a Film Institute Society supporting the parent body. There is no reason why during the coming winter 40 or 50 of such societies should not spring into being, each with a membership of several hundred, and all together representing a formidable influence in the direction of increasing the appreciation of the film "as a means of entertainment and instruction."



# NOTES OF THE QUARTER

## A Government Propaganda Department ?

Relief is felt in all quarters that the film work of the Empire Marketing Board has not passed into limbo with the dissolution of the Board itself. On the contrary Sir Stephen Tallents, who has been transferred to a high position in the Post Office, has carried over with him—temporarily at any rate—the Board's Film Library Film Unit, with the intention of continuing the former's invaluable services to schools, and of making the latter's services available to government departments that may wish to use the film for publicity or propaganda purposes. Even the cinema at the Imperial Institute, for whose continuance fears were expressed, has taken on a new lease of life, thanks to the generosity of an anonymous Scottish benefactor; and Sir William Furse's article on another page of this issue shows that the cinema's popularity is likely to grow as its usefulness expands. The latest experiment tried there, of combining the B.B.C. broadcasts to schools with a programme of suitable illustrative films, has drawn 'full houses' of appreciative children and educators. The new lease of life given to the E.M.B. Film Library and Unit is, however, a temporary one, as at present announced, for six months only. No doubt it is not quite clear whether the Post Office is the natural department which could be expected permanently to provide an educational service for schools—such as is given by the E.M.B. Library. Perhaps in the interim consideration will be given to the possibility of more closely relating such work to the work of the British Film Institute—a body obviously concerned to promote and extend the very functions which the E.M.B. Library has been discharging.

## Film Societies and the B.F.I.

The new Merseyside Film Institute Society is appealing for at least 1,000 members, to enable it to exert an effective influence on behalf of the filmgoer in Liverpool who would like to see more of the 'unusual' type of film that so rarely gets far beyond London. The Merseyside Society is nothing if not comprehensive in its programme of activities for the coming winter: these include a series of lectures on film topics, an exhibition of film 'stills,' and a national competition for the best film made by amateurs. The Society is also backing, by organised publicity, the showing of Pabst's *DON QUIXOTE* in a Liverpool picture house. We understand that the organisers of the Society plan to create, at an early date, other local societies in outlying parts of the Merseyside, in order to prevent anything in the nature of over-centralisation of interest in Liverpool. This is an excellent idea, which we hope will prove contagious. Meanwhile, when is Manchester going to make a move to catch up the long start she has given Liverpool in this matter?

Remarkable proof of the interest aroused in the Film Institute and the movement of which it is the centre is forthcoming from Maidstone, where no less than 600 people attended on Sunday evening, September 24th, a public meeting to hear Mr. R. S. Lambert speak on the subject, and to see a programme of special films of which the best known was *THE BLUE LIGHT*. The gathering was fully representative of all branches of life in Maidstone and District, and has led to the formation of a Maidstone Film Society which, with the help of the public spirited owner of several of the local picture houses, proposes to run Sunday evening shows for its members, and also to co-operate with the British Film Institute in its work.

## The Gramophone Commission—Finance

It has not been possible recently to report anything about the Gramophone Commission: the unfortunate but simple fact is that its proper work has almost entirely been held up for lack of funds. The bodies from which financial supply had legitimately been expected have been forced to severe measures of economy, and further expenditure was not to be thought of. In these circumstances a fresh departure had to be made, viz.: to seek relatively small cash donations and relatively large guarantees. This plan has proved successful: sufficient cash donations have been received to enable a substantial beginning to be made, and sufficient guarantees to cover most of the estimated expenditure and so give the executive sufficient time to complete the necessary financial provision without further delaying the Commission's proper work. This work of completion, however, is not going to be easy, and the Commission is pledged not to make further call upon the guarantors until every effort has been made to find the necessary money elsewhere.

It is gratifying to be able to report this progress in times when all educational effort is feeling the effect of world-wide depression.

## A Course of Electricity lessons by Film

G. B. Equipments Ltd. is making a simultaneous attack on the two main difficulties in the way of modern aids to learning—the lack of cheap apparatus and suitable films—by issuing a new 16mm. sound-on-film projector on hire-purchase and by forming an Education Department for the production of teaching films. Dr. Geoffrey Martin, who has been appointed in charge of the new department, is at work on a series of twenty lessons in electricity, of which the first is completed. Each film consists of two reels, and the series is designed to cover what would normally be a three years' course; with the aid of these films progress should be very much more rapid than with the old blackboard and text-





ME PROPER BLACK MAN, by Walter Creighton, Publicity Films Ltd.

book method. Both sight and sound can be switched on or off independently at any point, so that the teacher can supplement either with his own additions or explanations. The method is therefore extremely flexible, and allows scope for the teacher's personality and for special attention to backward pupils. Films on other subjects are under consideration, and text books are being prepared. The new projector is described in our technical section.

#### Instruction in Cinematography

In another part of this issue we publish an account of the course in cinematography available to students at the Polytechnic, London. The course covers all technical branches of film production, and forms part of the syllabus of the School of Photography, of which Mr. L. J. Hibbert has recently been appointed principal. At Vaughan College, Leicester, a number of University Extension courses have been held on the theory and technique of the film, and a series of ten lectures is to be given during the

spring on "The Art of the Cinema and its Social Relationships," by Mr. John Grierson.

#### Public Lectures on the Film

A series of public lectures on the subject "Are Films Worth While?" has been arranged by the Y.W.C.A. at the Central Club, Great Russell Street, for Tuesday evenings in October. Mr. Paul Rotha's lecture on October 3rd dealt with mechanical development from magic lantern to talkie; Mr. Andrew Buchanan, editor of the *Ideal Cinemagazine*, spoke on the propaganda and political value of films under the title "Axes to Grind," and Miss Mary Field on their ethical and educational value. On October 24th Mr. R. S. Lambert will give an address on "Plucking the Heart Strings," dealing with emotional values, and on October 31st Miss C. A. Lejeune in "Eyes and No Eyes" describes what it is worth while to look for in films. The lectures are held at 7.30 and the price of admission is one shilling.





CARGO FROM JAMAICA : Basil Wright, E.M.B.

## THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE

AND THE FILMS OF THE EMPIRE MARKETING BOARD

By Lt.-General Sir William Furse,  
Director of the Imperial Institute

**R**EMEMBERING as I do my own complete ignorance of the Imperial Institute and its purpose when I was appointed nearly eight years ago to become its Director, and the first layman to occupy that post, it may be well to state briefly the origin of the Imperial Institute and the services it renders in the development of our Empire.

Founded by the late King Edward VII as a memorial to his mother's first jubilee in 1887, it was opened by Queen Victoria in the spring of 1893. Throughout these forty years it has continuously been occupied with the raw products of every kind and of every part of the Empire. Its services have been at the disposal of the home and overseas Governments and of their peoples as a clearing house of information concerning such

primary products; in its laboratories analyses and technical investigations are carried out on samples received and after the fullest co-operation with merchants and users of such products and advice rendered by a range of technical advisory committees, reports—full, authoritative and impartial—are sent out to the enquiring Government or individual.

One other service has always been entrusted to us, namely, education. For this purpose exhibition galleries were erected as part of the great building in South Kensington.

In the spring of 1926, with approval of the Board of Governors, a complete re-organization of these galleries was undertaken, because it was felt that the full development of inter-Imperial trade



must be dependent ultimately on a wider and better informed interest on the part of all of us in the life, work and products of world-wide and daily importance to trade and commerce which is being carried on in each country included in the British Empire. It was further decided to concentrate our educational campaign on the rising generation.

To teach anything to anybody the first essential is to arouse their interest. The quickest approach to the mind is through the eye. The ear will then become hungry. Both eye and ear will close up unless they are properly fed by artist and teacher.

On this basis our present arrangements of the galleries has been worked out as an educational centre in Empire geography, each country being presented as the home of men and women of our own stock and other races.

From the first we longed for the moving picture as well as the still. The Empire Marketing Board immediately came to our aid. At their expense a pavilion attached to the galleries was converted into a cinema which, since July, 1927, has given twenty-six displays weekly, four each week-day and two on Sundays. The total attendances have amounted to over 1,603,000 and, roughly, half of the audiences have been boys and girls from 1,477 different schools, many of which have sent their classes for their instruction in Empire geography term after term.

The funds necessary for the upkeep of the cinema have been provided similarly by the Empire Marketing Board.

Now, for reasons incomprehensible to most people interested in the development of inter-Imperial trade, the Empire Marketing Board has been brought to an untimely end.

The Imperial Institute itself is quite unable to finance the cinema and, consequently, the educational value of its galleries for lessons in Empire geography will be correspondingly lessened unless some other source of financial help may be discovered at the eleventh hour.

To educationalists it may be surprising to learn that the Board of Education has never contributed anything to the upkeep of the Imperial Institute galleries. Such is, however, the fact, although the necessary funds for the upkeep of the British Museum, Natural History Museum, London Museum, National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, Wallace Collection, Bethnal Green Museum and the Imperial War Museum, figure annually on the Board of Education Vote. Moreover, this is through no lack of appreciation on the part of the Board of the educational value of the galleries. Their own Committee set up some three or four years ago to enquire specifically into the teaching of Empire geography in the schools all over the country laid special stress on the striking results of visits to these galleries and, indeed, expressed the hope that the Director of the Imperial Institute might find means of assisting schools in the provinces.

We have done what we can on our meagre resources in the way of special packets of postcards on various products and by samples which are sold

at the lowest prices, but it is really a case of Mahomet and the mountain. Nothing but visits to the galleries can do much good. Dioramas, models, raised maps, samples in our glass-cases cannot be transported from school to school. Even films in the cinema depicting scenery or the sequence of agricultural production, mining operations, natural history, industrial uses of various raw products, lose much of their educational value unless they are seen as a *supplement* to the static exhibits and to the talks which are given in the cinema almost every Wednesday and Thursday in term-time—given too, for the most part, by men whose working lives are spent in one or another country in the Empire overseas.

In this connection, the Empire Marketing Board, on the advice of their Film Committee, demonstrated their power and vision by bearing the cost of the construction and maintenance of a film library in a small building detached but quite close to the cinema. The value of this to Empire education in the provinces can be realised by the following figures. The Library was started in the autumn of 1931; during the first six months 350 schools and institutes made repeated use of the films; this number rose to 650 by August, 1932, when the enlarged catalogue of films was published. The increase during 1933 has continued. At the present time we are sending films to 800 different schools and institutes. This surely demonstrates that the value of well produced films are more and more being appreciated by teachers throughout the country. Let us be thankful that the Film Library and the Film Unit, under that able producer Mr. John Grierson, have been saved by Government from the wreck of the Empire Marketing Board.

One more word. It is true that the intelligence and investigations services rendered by the Imperial Institute are more directly valuable to the Colonies than those provided in the galleries. On the other hand, it does not require much vision to appreciate the probability that, in a democracy such as ours, the wider the interest and knowledge concerning each country in the Empire amongst our own future voters and workers, the greater the chance of our developing our wonderful heritage on sensible, scientific and human lines. That is why we concentrate in our galleries on the rising generation.

(Since this was written, a private benefactor—a Scotsman—has come to our aid to enable us to keep the cinema and its working staff alive till the spring, in order to give the government time to decide on the future of the Imperial Institute.)

The news that Mr. H. Bruce Woolfe had resigned from British Instructional Films, Ltd., was received with regret by the public which has long associated his name with educational films, and in particular with the *SECRETS OF NATURE* series. We hope to be able to publish in our next issue some information about Mr. Bruce Woolfe's plans for the future.



# MUSIC AND THE SYNCHRONISED FILM

By Clarence Raybould

Music is returning to the cinema, but as yet directors are slow to realise its fullest possibilities, particularly in the production of documentary films. Mr. Raybould, who discusses some of the difficulties of composition for synchronised films, wrote the musical score for Rotha's *CONTACT* and *WHERE THE ROAD BEGINS*, by John Holmes.

IN view of the public revulsion against the flood of dialogue in so many films of the last three or four years and the consequent tendency to enlist again the aid of music, sometimes even to the exclusion of the spoken word or at least retaining only an intermittent commentary, the comparatively new art of synchronised musical accompaniment or description may perhaps be discussed with equal interest to both sides of film production—the commercial and the artistic.

When, at the end of 1932, I was asked to undertake the task of supplying music for the then forthcoming film *Contact*, it was with considerable diffidence that I accepted the invitation. This was not due to lack of interest. On the contrary, the theme of the film appealed strongly to my imagination. But I was fearful of being unable to put into practice certain ideas on the subject of the marriage of picture and sound which I had been considering for some little while. Naturally, I had hoped to be able to write new music for the complete picture, but in the end, for various reasons, the time available was so short that it became necessary to select already existing music and, on the score of economy, non-copyright music. That the result, though largely a compromise, has been favourably received reveals the interest displayed by the public in orchestral music. But at the same time it clearly proves that any attempt to adapt already existing music to a new conception in terms of film cannot of necessity produce a wholly satisfactory result.

Apart from the difficulty of finding existing music of the right nature for any particular film sequence, it is infinitely harder to satisfy artistic standards which should hold good in this alliance of sight and sound when, to meet the demands of the changing moods of the film, the unfortunate music must be left unfinished, hacked about, loose bars sewn up or otherwise maltreated. It is clear that the only successful method of setting music to a film, especially where there is no spoken commentary, is for the music to be specially composed. And it is here that our practical difficulties really begin.

Music, by comparison with action such as expressed by the visual images of film, develops slowly. A mere pictorialisation in music of a succession of film 'shots' will not result in a satisfactory musical phrase or movement. On the other hand, a reversal of the procedure, attempting to illustrate visually a definite piece of music, will slow down and govern the shot-construction of the film. The two jobs of construction must be undertaken together, with a

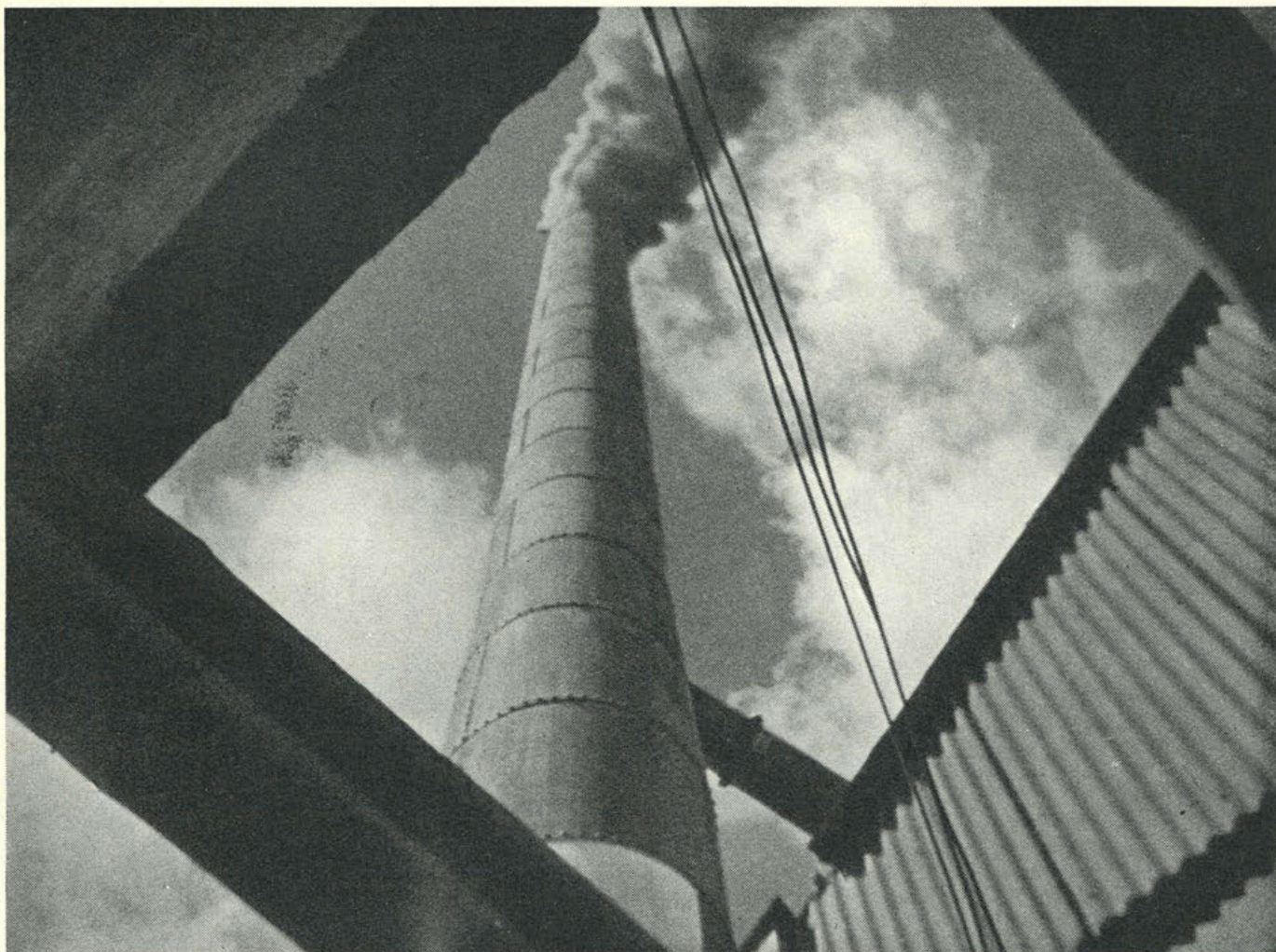
certain elasticity on either side. So far, the elasticity has almost wholly been on the part of the musical composer.

The type of film, however, in which music is mostly required at the moment calls for a spoken commentary, in which case the music must provide only an unobtrusive background to the speaking voice. The suppressed nature of the music in such films, where it is constantly being faded-down or faded-up to accommodate the speaker, quite obviously gives the musical composer no opportunity at all, and it is quite frequent to find gramophone records employed in place of a living orchestra. This, despite the fact that in the process of 'dubbing' the intrinsic defects of the records are more than doubled. Some attempts are being made to construct the film so that the necessary commentary falls in blocks, separated by quite long intervals during which music alone is played. The results of the experiment will be watched with interest.

Few film producers so far reveal any real recognition of the value of good music to the cinema. The ignorance which exists among the executive powers regarding music is almost unbelievable. It appears to be their opinion that if a few hack musicians are supplied to a conductor, the resulting 'selections' constitute a 'special musical accompaniment.' They fail to appreciate that the visual appeal of the film can be doubled by the accompaniment of the right music. There must be at least a proper understanding on the part of movie producers and directors of the significance of film before the synchronised film can progress to a higher plane. The musician must be given time and opportunity to get 'into' the picture. He should be able to work out all his musical ideas step by step with the progress of the visual sequences and evolve from the tedious process of a mechanical measurement of feet and frames an accompaniment which will not only be an illumination of the camera's story but a musical entity in itself.

Assuming that this ideal has been achieved and the musical score, upon which so much time and thought have been expended, is ready for synchronisation to the picture, there still remains the problem of adequate recording on to film of the beauty of tone, balance and colour of orchestration upon which the score so much relies. In brief, the musician is at the mercy of a well-meaning body of sound-engineers who cannot yet reproduce the tone of a single violin adequately, let alone a mass of strings; whose idea of the characteristic tone of an oboe seems to be founded on tooth-comb and tissue-paper; and who, when criticised, think themselves unjustly abused because the banjo, the plucked string and the saxophone come off fairly well in





WHERE THE ROAD BEGINS : Hillman Humber Cars, by Steuart Films ; music by Clarence Raybould

recording. Research by sound engineers is badly needed on the recording of sound qualities for reproduction at high amplification. There has as yet been no film recording of an orchestra, or even a part of one, to my knowledge which can stand comparison with the standard tone-quality of the best gramophone records. It is of no avail to reply that film is not disc. There must be expended the care and research on sound-film recording which the gramophone companies have already devoted to their task.

#### MORE NEWSREEL

If the B.B.C. news bulletin is the most popular item in wireless programmes, the newsreel, with a public increasingly film-minded, is making rapid strides in popularity. Mr. Fraser suggests in another part of this issue that there is still room for originality and enterprise in the production of news items, but there are welcome signs that the trade is alive to the demand for more and better programmes of this type. Paramount's international newsreel service is to be improved by special editing of foreign items ; experts are to be sent out to Paris and Berlin to select items for showing in this country. Western Electric have designed a new and easily portable sound camera for newsreel work ; and Fox Photos Ltd. (the well-known press photographers ; not the sponsors of British Movietone News) have inaugurated at a very reasonable price a monthly newsreel

service taken by 16 mm. cameras. If this scheme develops on a large scale, as seems probable, it should mean greater facilities for processing 16 mm. stock, and the consequent removal of one of the chief objections to the use of sub-standard cameras by professionals.

The opening of the Victoria Station News Theatre in London by Mr. Norman Hulbert, managing director of British News Theatres, Ltd., marks an important stage in newsreel history. This is the first railway station newsreel theatre in this country, and it is hoped that several other terminus stations will have news theatres in the near future. The construction of the Victoria theatre has been a triumph over difficulties on the part of Mr. Alistair MacDonald, the architect, Mr. S. W. Budd, who designed the steel-work, and the contractors who carried out the work of construction. The theatre was built during night hours in order to interfere as little as possible with the normal activities of the station. Special provision had to be made for sound insulation, as the theatre is suspended in mid-air within the station, with traffic passing under the floor of the auditorium. The double entrance forms an archway between platform 16 and Buckingham Palace Road. The very small space that was available has been used with the greatest economy and the capacity of the theatre is considerably greater than appears from the outside. Among interesting features of the design are the "signal-cabin" windows, the amusing mural decorations by Edward Carrick, and the small illuminated panel near the screen, giving ten minutes' notice of the arrival and departure of the principal trains. The programme lasts 50 minutes and prices are 6d. between mid-day and 4 p.m. and 1s. from 4 to 11 p.m. On Sundays the theatre is open from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.





The characteristic wave-outline of the note A in the treble clef, drawn on a strip of paper with pen, brush and compass. On the left is the sound track which has been photographed from the finished drawing. When passed through the sound projector it will reproduce the note shown above.

## SYNTHETIC SOUND

### HOW SOUND IS PRODUCED ON THE DRAWING BOARD

Herr R. Pfenninger, whose invention is described in the following article, is the first man to make a sound film solely by means of drawings. The melody is not played on a musical instrument, but actually produced by drawings on paper. With infinite patience the oscillations of each individual note are accurately drawn on strips of paper, and then photographed on the sound track of the film. By this means not only can the tones of the piano and violin be copied, but entirely new timbres may be produced on the drawing board by means of pen and ink.

**A** CURIOUS film, entitled *DIE TÖNENDE HANDSCHRIFT*, (i.e., "The Sound Manuscript") has been running for some time in Germany. The performance opens with an explanation of the making of the film and is followed by an excellent rendering of Händel's *Largo*. But the tone in this case has not been produced by musical instruments or by any of the new electrical instruments and then recorded on the sound film, but has been created on paper with the aid of compass, brush and pen, first leaping into life and producing audible sound when passed through a sound-film reproducing apparatus.

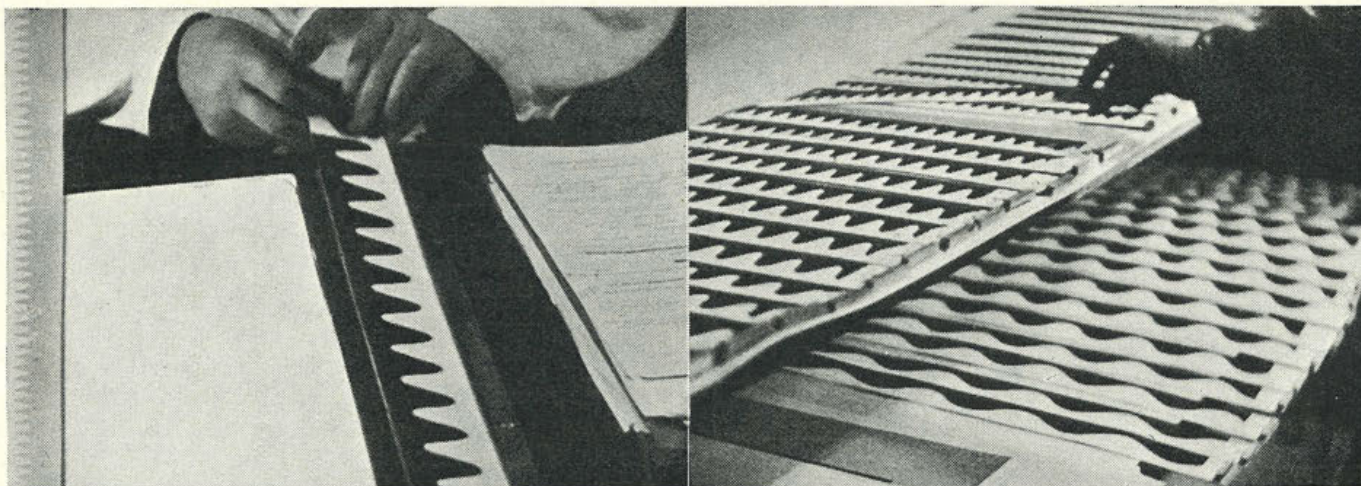
How is this possible? We all know that sound is nothing but certain undulatory movements of the

By Paul Popper

air, which create acoustic impressions on our ears. The special characteristics of these undulations can be recorded with the aid of electrical instruments such as the oscillograph. With this instrument it is possible to record in continuous succession every tone of a violin, and from these oscillograph records to characterize accurately the individual sounds on paper. This results in a series of sound templets or, so to speak, in an alphabet including every tone of the violin. If, by reversing the process, several sound templets are arranged together so as to constitute a melody, and photographed in suitably reduced proportions on the sound track of a film, then, if the latter is run through a sound-film reproducing apparatus, the loud speaker emits a melody which has never originated from a musical instrument.

Probably it was some such process of thought that led at last to the invention of the film *DIE TÖNENDE HANDSCHRIFT* by a German, R. Pfenninger. It is, however, not Pfenninger's intention to produce



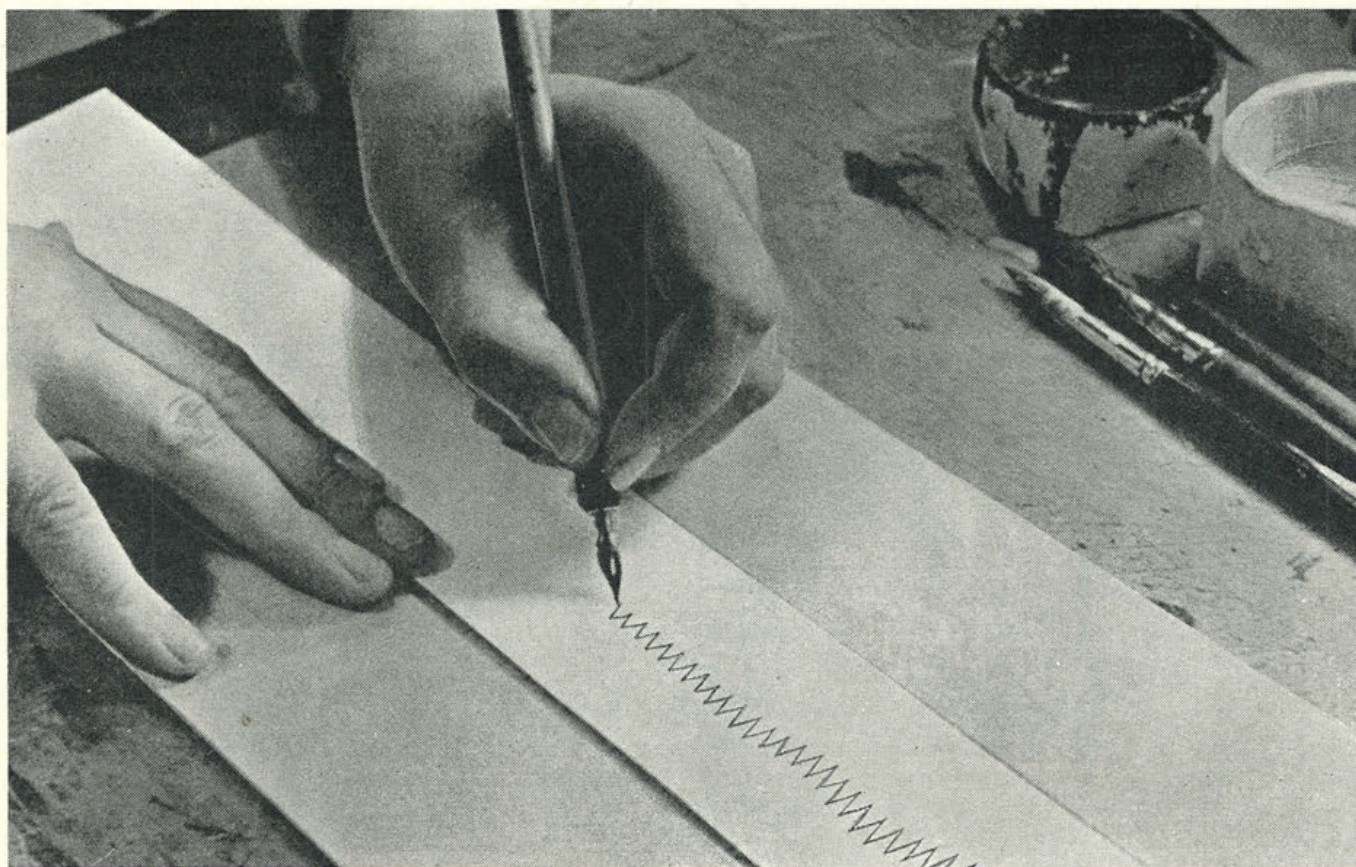


One sound strip after another is clamped into a frame and photographed from above with an ordinary cine-camera. Microphone and amplifier are eliminated. Each strip represents a single tone, and the number of shots taken of each strip depends on the length of the note. On the right is the set of templates used in *PITCH UND PATCH*, the synthetic talkie cartoon illustrated overleaf.

graphically the tones of well-known musical instruments such as the violin or the piano; on the contrary, his aim is to construct music of entirely new timbres. In this respect he can already claim to have had a considerable measure of success with the *Largo* film. The tone is altogether new, with a pitch somewhere between that of the violoncello and the organ. At present three sound films of this kind are being shown in Germany.

The Pfenninger graphical method of sound production has become a serious competitor of

modern electrical instruments, the products of the recent advance in electro-acoustics. Pfenninger's process is still very intricate and laborious, and as yet no one else is capable of composing Pfenninger's "sound manuscript." Meanwhile, the *TÖNENDE HANDSCHRIFT* must remain an interesting curiosity. Pfenninger hopes to perfect a method whereby sound waves can be "written" mechanically. It is said that he is at present constructing an apparatus like a typewriter which, instead of letters, will set together wave signs in succession. It will naturally



THIS ZIG-ZAG WILL PRODUCE THE SOUND OF A BELL WHEN PASSED THROUGH THE SOUND-FILM PROJECTOR





**PITCH UND PATCH:** a synthetic talkie cartoon with dialogue and music; made entirely on paper, without the aid of actors or musical instruments.

be essential to have a separate "sound-wave type-writer" for every tone in view of the various characteristics of the sound waves. The setting up and printing of sound writings is quite within the realm of possibility. It is also feasible that speech and songs could be produced on paper in a similar manner. If this were to materialise we could then hear words and songs which have never been uttered by a human being.

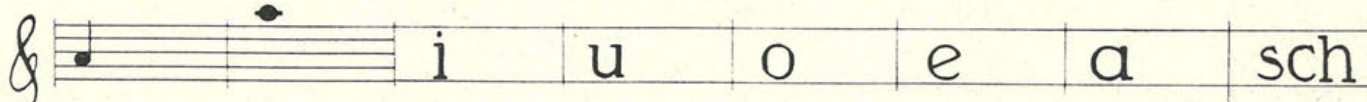
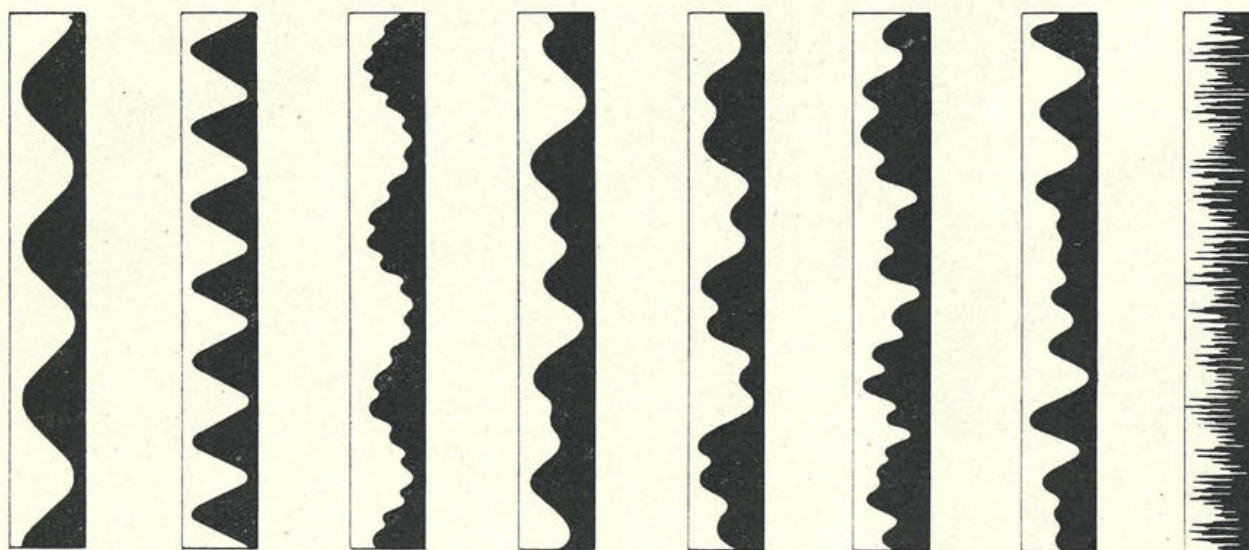
In the spring of 1931 an Englishman, E. A. Humphries, had actually succeeded in drawing the words "all of a tremble" in wave script on paper and in producing them audibly with the aid of a conventional sound-film reproducing apparatus. But this invention, though in itself admirable, does not seem to suffer comparison with the artistic value of Pfenninger's invention. Humphries had probably studied the markings of various vocals and con-

sonants on a film track and simply copied them. Perhaps the Pfenninger method may also be suitable for retouching purposes. For instance, the hissing sounds of spoken words, which are suppressed during the recording of the sound film, could be subsequently replaced by drawings. It may also be possible to write an old Caruso record in sound script on paper by means of an oscillograph, purify the high tones by drawings and eliminate the needle and other disturbing noises by retouching.

### THE TELL-TALE HEART

A new producing company, Clifton Hurst Productions, Ltd., have chosen for their first venture *The Tell-Tale Heart*, based on the macabre story by Edgar Allen Poe. The producers are Mr. Harry Clifton and Mr. Desmond Hurst.

A correspondent who has seen the picture in the cutting stage writes that though it is impossible to judge the film as a whole, there is already ample proof that Desmond Hurst has a brilliantly imaginative sense of direction. The story is told simply and directly; and the film unfolds with a curious dream-like sensitivity to the boy's neurosis, as he tells his tale to the two doctors in the asylum. Superimposed close-ups of the old man's eye recur, showing the growth of his obsession and its effect on him. The final scene reaches great dramatic intensity when the sound of the beating heart, as imagined by the boy, rises to a climax and forces him to confess his murder. The sound was recorded from the actual beating of the human heart. The photography is unusually interesting, and Desmond Hurst is fortunate in having secured the assistance of the young artist photographer, Adrian Van der Horst. This film promises to be a very significant contribution to the English screen. B.B.



**THIS IS WHAT SOUNDS LOOK LIKE ON PAPER.** Note the difference between notes in music, and the more irregular outline of vowels and consonants. We may one day hear by this means whole speeches which have never been uttered.



# LANGUAGE AND FILM (II)

By Dr. J. B. C. Grundy

## A SOLUTION

Dr. Grundy, who is the author of 'Brush up your German,' 'Modern Method French,' 'New Ways of Teaching French,' and other productions, offers a practical solution to some of the difficulties outlined in his first article on the subject of dialogue in films published in the last issue of "Sight & Sound"

**W**ILL the language difficulty give the international film its *coup de grâce*, and will the scope of the existing dialogue picture thereby become "regionalized"—made for and by only one linguistic area; will Flanders and Bulgaria and the Basque country become film-centres in the near future? Or will dialogue lose its present preponderance over image so soon that the language problem will obligingly solve itself by disappearing? These and others were the questions which I endeavoured to discuss in a previous article on the interdependence of languages and film-production.

To consider the second of these queries first, most of the authoritative writers on cinema are agreed that dialogue at present takes up far more than its artistically justified share of a picture, and that the true form of the talking film, 'a homogeneous creation of word and picture which cannot be split up into parts that have meaning separately,' has hardly yet been reached. But this conception of the final goal of cinema must not obscure the long journey which still lies before it; it is an artistic rather than a practical prophecy, and is so meant. If it took Hollywood three years to change from silence to sound, a change which was vital to its existence, the more subtle transformation of Dialogue (with a big, big D) into a properly balanced sound-and-visual-image combination may well take ten or twenty, for aesthetic considerations have not yet much weight in high places and dialogue is still tolerably profitable.

All this raises the wider question of whether the film in its ideal form should be mainly national or international. Good art should undoubtedly be accessible to great numbers, but can any art—especially a new one—attain the ladder-top of international esteem before it has graduated on the lower rungs of more local appreciation? Frans Hals and Vermeer were great painters who evoked with perfection the men and women, the architecture and the scene of seventeenth-century Holland; we can appreciate their brilliance without going to Haarlem or to Delft. But we can appreciate the quality of it far better if we do, and, other things being equal, the closer our knowledge of Holland and its history, the finer our appreciation of the painters will be. Goethe was perhaps the least nationalistic of the modern great writers, and his philosophical outlook can be adequately grasped from translations; but the essential Goethe cannot



Annabella in Joe May's PARIS MEDITERRANEE

be understood without knowledge of the language he spoke and the civilization of which he formed a part. It seems to me that there is in all great art, however universally appreciated, a basic and inevitable nexus with time and place, and for this reason I do not believe that the new form of cinema can become a world-art before it has become a national art all over the world.

Such a view is at variance with that of many experts, and is perhaps in any case irrelevant; if it has any truth, it reinforces the opinion expressed earlier that we can expect a period of intensive local development before the sound-film can attain any permanent international form. In the meantime must the big film go, and will each language area be thrown back entirely upon its own resources? This appears to be the next problem to

For several years some of the leading picture-houses in different European capitals have derived both revenue and prestige from showing talkies in a foreign tongue; and the visitor to these picture-consider.





Walter Huston in GABRIEL OVER THE WHITE HOUSE (M-G-M.)

houses must have been interested to find that the large majority of the audiences were not members of a resident foreign colony or even travellers from abroad, but "locals." In other words the teaching of languages, joined no doubt to modern facilities for travel, has already produced in several countries a nucleus which can understand a foreign language well enough to enjoy a foreign talking film. This nucleus is growing rapidly. As an illustration, consider the fact that, every year, nearly 70,000 schoolchildren get as far as to offer a foreign language—usually with some kind of oral test—in the School Certificate examination, and that nearly half of them are successful. This figure is not only increasing steadily but is enormously greater than that of before the War. Cannot the rising linguistic tide be harnessed in the service of the talking film?

It has recently been demonstrated that any but the most technical ideas can be adequately and even elegantly expressed by a person in possession of a vocabulary of 1,200 English words—a considerably larger word-store, be it noted, than that of the less educated workman. This is an echo of a principle applied to the teaching of foreign languages in British and American schools for some years: word-frequency. Word-frequency means that books and lessons are arranged so as to present the most useful and common words first, and roughly in the order of their commonness; it has been brought to a scientific basis, and there is nothing to stop the ordinary pupil from acquiring a thorough knowledge of 1,200 words in two years—it is the vocabulary of the ordinary two-year language course. Side by side with this come two important facts: that languages are now taught as spoken languages, and that wide and ever growing encouragement is now given to young people to continue with them after leaving school. The gramophone and wireless have proved most useful and popular allies in this move-

ment. It does not seem unreasonable to prophesy that, very shortly, there will be an annual output from the British secondary and public schools of nearly a quarter of a million pupils with a sound knowledge of at least a thousand of the commonest words of one or more foreign languages, and some notions of how to speak them. Countries like Holland, Switzerland and Germany must have proportionately far higher totals. That should be the film-producer's chance. If he will apply the experience of the teacher to the dialogue of his films he will be able once more to entertain international aspirations for his products. It is surprising how easily the vocabulary of the ordinary French or German tale can be brought within the range of the 1,000 commonest French or German words; the extent of the adaptation is slight and not injurious to the character of the original. The dialogue of a film could be edited just as simply.

I believe that the producers might go even further. If wireless talks in foreign languages can interest tens of thousands, if the sales of a typical series of up-to-date language books can attain 100,000 within four years, why should not short foreign dialogue films prove equally attractive in the cinema? Ability to suit the action to the word is an advantage peculiar to the screen, and one which every teacher envies; why does not the producer turn this faculty to account and, by a series of bright one-reelers in other languages, help to create and develop the markets upon which he will depend if he is to recapture the international field? The field of travel could provide both amusement and instruction for the million people who cross the Channel every year and the several million more who listen to their adventures afterwards; whilst the prospect of Mr. Disney released upon talking versions of *La Fontaine*, Grimm, and Busch's *Max und Moritz* would be too entrancing to resist.



# THE CINEMA IN JAPAN

## A VISIT TO THE PICTURES IN THE FAR EAST

By E. K. Venables

Japan, who possesses one of the most highly developed systems of educational cinematography in the world, is a nation of "film-fans," and all over the country are picture theatres for popular entertainment, showing both Western and Japanese productions—the latter of an exclusively national and mainly traditional character. Mr. Venables, who has spent many years in the Far East, gives us a vivid impression of an afternoon spent at the Japanese talkies, as a European sees them.

WE have often been told that more films are produced in Japan than in any other country, but we have rarely met anybody who has ever seen one of them elsewhere. Like most things Japanese, they are in a class by themselves, definitely made for home consumption, but hardly intelligible, or even credible, to foreigners.

A cinema theatre, like other places of business here, is of a style unique and peculiarly oriental; a fairly solid concrete front, the rest of flimsy boards and sheets of tin. Current pictures are displayed on big painted placards, showing scenes from the story.

We enter to the clattering concerto of native wooden sandals on the hard rough floor, uncovered concrete throughout. Gingerly we take a perch on one of the long wooden benches, about a foot in height and much less in width, with a single back rail that catches us in the lower vertebrae. Among these floor-squatting people a seat of any kind is a modern luxury, unappreciated by ordinary-sized Europeans who sit huddled up in the limited space available, their knees jammed against the next bench so close in front. An effort is made to render visibility possible by sloping the floor towards the screen; the benches, however, are constructed vertical to this slope, and their forward tilt makes one's perch still more precarious.

If we pay extra and go upstairs to the balcony running round three sides of the diminutive building we must take off our shoes and squat on the hard matted floor. For a small additional charge cushions are supplied, and a brazier of glowing charcoal to warm one's fingers in cold weather. Looking around, we are struck by the bareness of the place; there is little or no attempt at decoration, or what we understand as ordinary comfort. But although there is so little outlay in this direction prices of admission range about the same as in other countries. Patrons can pack themselves away in a small space;



Eiji Nakano and Shizue Natsukawa in *ASHES*: by courtesy of the Film Society.

no regulations need be observed as to crowding or emergencies; even in the big city theatres it is quite usual to see passages, doorways and corridors jammed tight.

At other times there is plenty of room for small children to run around playing hide and seek, unchecked by any control; and it is probably long past their bedtime, anyway. Children of school age are not allowed to visit the cinema, owing to the risk of what are officially known as 'dangerous thoughts' which might creep in from foreign films. As in any Japanese place of meeting, men and women are segregated. An all-important policeman sits on one side of the balcony, getting a very distorted view of the screen, and keeping an eye open for any outbreak of indecorum, or possibly for dangerous thoughts.

People clatter and shuffle in and out, past you, round you, over you. Local gentlemen loudly inhale the remnants of their last meal, with the aid of a vigorously plied toothpick, and emit the grunts and gurgles which form the customary sign of gastronomic appreciation. The nation-wide pharyngeal catarrh gives rise to hearty snorts and snufflings; this is indeed a land of great expectorations. As in any public building, the retreats known as the Honourable Places of Convenience are rather more than close at hand. This country will never be fully interpreted to the world's film-going public until they introduce the stinkies.

Screen pictures are looked upon merely as subsidiary illustrations to story-telling, a long-lived



oriental pastime. The most important figure is the katsuben, the interpreter, or interrupter as he is called by ribald foreigners, for even when a talkie is shown he keeps going at full blast, the screen sound often being damped down to let the katsuben's raucous voice be better heard. He sits below and tells the story from the official book of words or his own vivid imagination. His written copy sometimes leaves him helpless and silent in the face of American humour and music. One day, in spite of muffled reproduction, we were heartily enjoying Eddie Cantor, but the native spectators, furious at someone else understanding anything that they could not, yelled at us for making so much noise.

Most Japanese film themes are drawn from feudal times, which after all ended officially only a few years ago, but persist in spirit still. Even the setting is largely unchanged; the men's coiffure, the means of travelling and lighting are different, for example; but dress, house interiors and many other details are much as we see them nowadays. Of movie action in the western sense there is little, and that spasmodic. A number of people are shown squatting round a charcoal brazier, talking, talking, talking, in which respect they are true to nature and nation. From time to time the view shifts to a different angle, but it is still the same group, the same conversation, which is meanwhile being spoken by the katsuben in as many different voices as there are characters.

There is always a plot between rival clans; the hero on one side, the villain on the other, with a wax-faced lady or two fluttering in silken kimono and flowered sash to provide the heart interest, though tenderer feelings must be subordinated to feudal allegiance and fierce revenge. The strutting warriors, the obsequious underlings, the spying, suspicion and meticulous formalities, make an instructive background to social phenomena in the nation to-day.

After anything up to an hour or two of plot and counter-plot, impassioned threats and eloquent defiance, the banging and twanging of strange instruments in the orchestra prepare us for one of the inevitable sword-fights. The hero is waylaid by a dozen rival clansmen, who surround him with a ring of glittering blades. The rules of the game appear to require that they shall attack only one at a time, while the others skip round, holding their long swords stiffly before them, and looking terribly fierce. Fiercest of all is the hero; he scowls darkly as he picks out his opponents and puts them on the casualty list. Swords flash rapidly; the contestants glare ferociously, slashing, parrying, leaping and hopping, running off and halting to renew the duel, bounding, smiting and staggering. One after another the villains dramatise a whole series of gory deaths, but the hero cannot kill them off fast enough; a score are down and fifty more still there, jumping about and waiting for their turn to be smitten. The lovely maiden, or some other obliging person, has gone for help; we see it coming, but the hero is hard pressed. His strength is as the

strength of ten, his agility as of twenty-six. His allies arrive; the fight is free for all and a glorious scrimmage. It breaks up into smaller groups and running lines, over the bridge and down the lane, under the trees and out again. Crash go the wood and paper walls of a house in which the fight still rages; clothing, lanterns, doors and fences fly in fragments near and far. Our side wins out, of course, but it is left to the hero to chop down the rest of the dastardly miscreants, after which he wipes his good sword clean, stamps around and grimaces at all points of the compass. We have timed some of these film fights at as much as thirty-seven minutes, off and on, and they are liable to break out again at any moment, while the orchestra evokes martial music from strings and pipe.

Talkies, like telephones, radio and gramophone records, are mostly a deafening hoot, for Japan is the country where people are most fond of hearing their own voices, shrill and nasal though they may be to the western ear. The use of any acoustic instrument seems to necessitate a bellowing as if to let the whole world hear at once. Some modern films are turned out for the younger generation, with stories of youthful aspirations set against elderly tyranny, but with a tearful morbidity in keeping with the national tendency to melancholia. Love and kisses are taboo and censored out of foreign films before exhibition.

Of late the movies have been doing their share in telling the nation about its sweeping victories at the Olympic Games, and also in China. Japan produces very little machinery, and most of the imposing war equipment has had to be imported from abroad. Tanks, bombing planes, aircraft detectors and other military equipment are proudly displayed as signs of the nation's might and inventive genius. It is sometimes hard to distinguish between news reels, which are dramatised incidents, and genuine drama. These oriental military scenes are mystifying to anyone acquainted only with prosaic European warfare.

It is just a little strange to see press photographers and journalists fussing about right up at the front line, wearing marks of identification on their civilian clothes, and armed against the iniquitous Chinese irregulars. Sentinels stoutly point fixed bayonets at nobody in particular; observers stand in the open and gaze impressively through trench periscopes over miles of flat country. Wire entanglements show not a single barb; bullets are obligingly luminous, and throw off sparks when they hit the ground. The troops are shown wearing polished steel helmets and white gloves, as workmen do in Japan itself. They go into action with waving banners, brandished swords and grimacing fiercely in the manner of the old-time warriors.

You may find it almost hard to believe this plain account of things we are accustomed to seeing, but it may help you to understand a little why Japanese films, like many other aspects of Japanese life, are at present somewhat beyond world-wide appreciation.





British Movietone in search of news

AS the Great War killed the artificiality of pre-war Edwardian days and created a universal realism in art, so the economic crisis of to-day is having a similar effect on cinema. As political events touch the individual more closely and the collapse of international exchanges are matters of everyday table-talk, so people want to know more about themselves, about everyday happenings, about world affairs. We are living in stirring times. The twentieth century is changing the course of humanity. People are living more vitally. The thirst for knowledge is increasing by leaps and bounds. Wearied, too, by the artificiality and effiteness of entertainment films, the public are turning more and more to the newsreel to find reality. The erection of another newsreel theatre in Victoria Station brings the number of theatres interested solely in realities to eight in England. Through the enterprise of Fox Photos you can buy sixteen millimetre newsreel to show in your homes. The French newsreel theatres, open from 8 a.m. to 2 a.m., are reckoned to be the most profitable side of the exhibition business. New York boasts of several newsreel theatres and there are signs of further developments from the Continent. In France and Germany more newsreel is shown in the average cinema programme than here. There, newsreel programmes of half an hour are not uncommon, as a prelude to the entertainment programme. This is perhaps attributable to the greater social and political consciousness of Continental nations.

The newsreel is one branch of cinema that justifies its claim to be of social use. For years it was the only movie expression that had any realist function. To-day, with the development of documentary, it no longer stands alone. Nevertheless, the newsreels are an important instrument in the creation of a socially-

# NEWSREEL

## REALITY OR ENTERTAINMENT?

By Donald Fraser

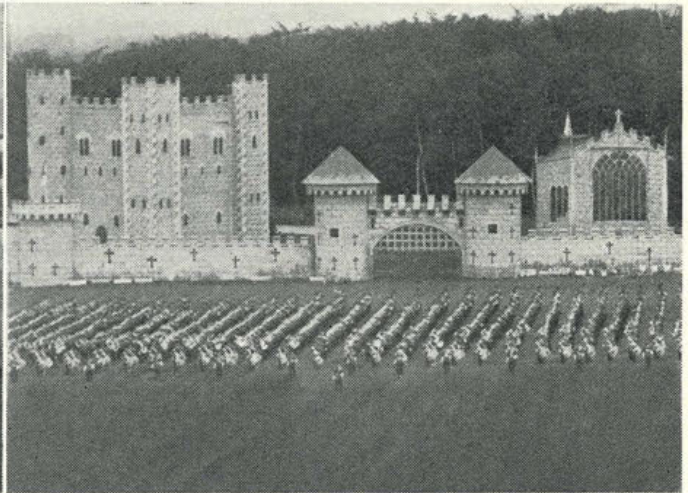
conscious cinema. Its concern with realities can broaden people's minds by experience; it can stir mental apathy, create a consciousness of other people's conditions, and thus enlarge their humanity. These are a few of the functions of newsreel, and occasionally they have been carried out.

But side by side with this increasing concern of the mass with reality, there is little parallel development in the quality of the newsreels. The editors of the newsreels have jogged along in blinkers for over a decade, reeling out the same pitiful assemblage week after week. The root of the trouble lies in a confusion of issue between what constitutes entertainment and what is 'news,' upon which subject our popular penny newspapers also have yet to make up their mind. They are divided in themselves; 'news' becomes entertainment and entertainment 'news,' by some strange theory that the public will not read 'news' unless it is dressed up like entertainment. Like the popular newspapers, the newsreels have a profound interest in superficialities and labour under the current journalistic misapprehension that names make 'news.' Like their cousins in Fleet Street they are confirmed copyists. Witness the abnormal use of aeroplanes for a new angle after the success of the Movietone record of the Cheltenham Flyer; or the crop of low-angle shots on racing after the American covering of an Agua Caliente meeting a few years back.

Take any current newsreel and examine it for its 'news' value. A truer journalistic sense is found among the documentary producers. Too long have the newsreels shot and re-shot the bathing beauties, the posturings of political leaders, the trappings of royalty, the opening of cottage hospitals and what not. A particularly distressing feature of recent newsreel has been the increasing volume of military scenes. There is no intentional propaganda on the part of the editors. It is laziness that causes this preponderance of military subjects. It is far easier to send a cameraman to shoot a military parade. Militarists are good showmen and the Army is constantly parading. Let the newsreel editors examine their consciences and decide what effect they may have on immature and undeveloped minds. Admitting the sure-fire appeal of the fife and drum, are we in this day and age attempting to keep the war spirit alive?

Politically they strive to be entirely impartial, though a Fascist influence is discernible at times. One branch of the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association refused to book an American newsreel unless it reduced its Hitlerite propaganda. British





PATHE GAZETTE : The Royal Family at Braemar, and the Aldershot Tattoo

Movietone strives after a B.B.C. impartiality, although it is a B.B.C. jockey trying to ride a Wardour Street horse. Paramount News approximates very closely to the American tabloid. Gaumont Graphic suggests a bourgeois atmosphere, redolent of public houses, while Universal Talking News inclines more and more to the funny page of the Chorlton-cum-Hardy Gazette.

Technically too, the newsreels lag far behind their more urgent competitors of documentary. There are two fundamental faults of method that are attributable to the same lack of imagination that has yet to create intelligent subject matter. First, the 'safety' shot and secondly, dependent on the first, bad editing. The 'safety' shot denies the progress of movie, in so far as it cannot reveal a new aspect of a subject that is not seen by the normal eye. If a shot of a rower is to be obtained, the newsreel cameraman's shooting would consist of two 'safety' shots; a long-shot and a mid-shot showing the complete man, oar and boat; whereas had the cameraman the eye of an artist, he would have tried to translate the action of rowing into something more. He might first have shown a shot of the man in the boat, then a shot of the body straining, then a close-up of sweating forehead, the oars, the hands pulling rhythmically, the nose of the boat pushing through the water and then back to the complete shot of the rower. And if he were a lyricist he would add shots of the sun dancing on the water, the clouds passing overhead, the trees passing on the bank. Then the editor would have had material from which he could construct a short item with the physical feeling of rowing. But, as things are, he has little opportunity to express himself with flat reproductions of nature.

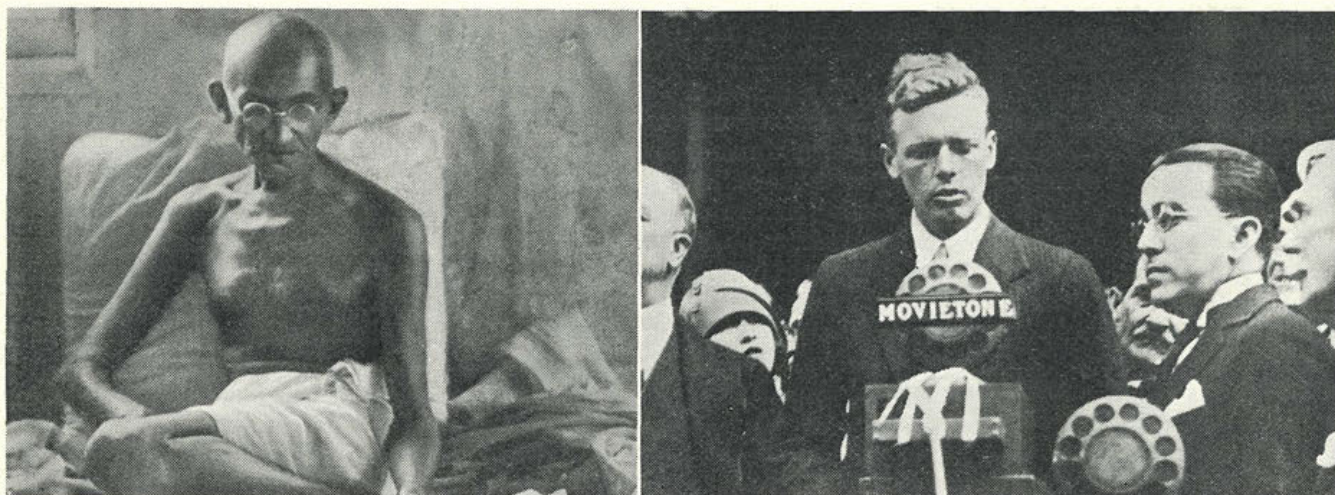
These faults are traditional and the cause is rooted deep in the attitude of the commercial movie industry to actualities and documentary. Very rarely will any movie company consider sending a director to cover a news item or even a two-reel documentary. The attitude is, as in every aspect of the industry, tied to financial reasons. The movie companies are only interested in the six or seven reel studio

production, making large profits; newsreels and 'shorts' of any description are simply regarded as fill-ups, thought of and designed as a prelude to the earth-shaking feature picture. See any review of a 'short' in a film trade paper: 'a useful filler,' 'good for that odd ten minutes' and so on.

It is at once apparent that this attitude is wrong; if one cannot leave the studio production to the mercies of the cameraman, why should the latter be any more capable of making constructive newsreels or 'shorts'? At present a newsreel unit consists of a cameraman, a sound engineer and an assistant; all technicians, the chauffeurs of the movie business. There are and have been exceptions. Occasionally one finds a cameraman who is constructively imaginative. But a director would give them just what they lack; construction, elimination of 'safety' shots, illuminating angles, poetics, material worthy of editing. As an alternative, if the costs of directors were too heavy, it should not be impossible for the editor of the newsreel to send his cameraman out with a scenario, tell him what shots to get and how to shoot them; instead of sending him off into the blue with a free hand. Admitting the exigencies of newsreel production, the lack of time in every department, some indication could still be given of the material to be shot and the method of shooting even on the most urgent job. Each item should be a small film in itself, with a definite construction, a beginning, a middle and an end. It should have a purposeful drive.

The responsibility of the newsreel editor to the public is as great as that of an editor of a national daily. With a voluntary audience of fifty million a year to see the product an illimitable power for good or evil is at his command. A Northcliffe of newsreels, who will lift the newsreel out of its present derelict rut, is yet to be born. What films he could give us! Reports of trade, developments in public and social services, scenes of unemployment, films of the slums to stimulate action, analyses of the week's sport, great engineering developments, new inventions, colonial enterprises, politics, a host of subjects lie ready to his hand.





An exclusive interview with Mr. Gandhi : and Colonel Lindbergh at the microphone. BRITISH MOVIETONE (FOX)

## CAN HISTORY BE TAUGHT BY FILM?

By F. Wilkinson, Headmaster, Wallasey School

WITH the inception of the British Film Institute the opportunity for the production of films intended for no other purpose than that of teaching has at last arrived. Instructional films have been on the market for some years and in such subjects as geography and science the requirements of teachers have already been partly met. But in the case of history less than half a dozen examples have so far appeared, and these unfortunately serve only to demonstrate what a history film should *not* be. The reason for this state of affairs is due partly to the fact that historical films are the most expensive and difficult to make and partly because teachers are still sceptical. They feel that no worthy purpose can be served by the introduction of a purely mechanical device into the teaching of a subject which is by character and tradition one of the humanities and closely related to literature. In their opinion the present methods of study and exposition have stood the test of ages and are ideally suited to their purpose. But most especially do they feel that the standards of scholarship are seriously endangered by the sort of interpretation of history which is to be expected from the film industry as it is at present organised.

Nevertheless, most teachers are now generally convinced of their obligation to adopt an educational medium of such potentiality, but history teachers, or at any rate those in public and secondary schools, are emphatically of the opinion that, before the next step is taken, further exploration of the problem should be made and an opportunity given for history specialists as a body to state their requirements. The obvious promoters of such an enquiry should be the British Film Institute and the Historical Association acting jointly.

It is true that a great deal of pioneer work has been done by the Commission on Educational and Cultural

Films and by the Historical Association through the work of Doctor Consitt, but the recommendations of both these bodies contained only vague suggestions as to the machinery to be set up for the making of history films. Until the right type of film has been discovered by experiment and a technique established the profession needs to be given some measure of control. Fortunately there is no need to look far for an analogy. The methods of the Central Council for School Broadcasting seem most suitable for adoption. There the subject matter is first prepared by collaboration between an expert and an actual teacher and then before transmission takes place, "*approval in detail*" is given by a committee representing the interests concerned. For the production of history films, however, a further instrument is required, the professional director. And moreover, since teaching and not entertainment films are involved, the director requires to be not only an expert at his craft but an educated person with a sense and knowledge of history as an academic subject. He will be difficult to find.

In defining what are the essential elements of a history film it should be understood that consideration is being given here to the class-room film only. In the first place the class-room film should be short, twenty minutes at the most, in order to allow sufficient time both before and after its exhibition for class purposes in relation to it. A class-room film can either teach on its own or illustrate what has been learned otherwise. It can also do both at the same time.

The purpose of the class-room film is not to replace the text book but to supplement it, and the facts with which it deals are those required by the syllabus. The study of history is not just a pleasant pastime, and the relevant facts require mental effort before they can be understood, especially if their relation



to one another in the sequence of events is to be comprehended. The business of the history film therefore is to educate and not to entertain, to compel mental effort by purposeful simplification and not to distract and excite by a welter of unessential decoration. And this is where a director with no historical sense or training will make his disastrous mistakes, for it is in the very nature of such a person to exploit his subject matter so as to create an effect flattering to his powers of magic, but not always implicit in the facts. Intrinsically the history film should be a contemporary document made animate. The director's function is to supply the animation. The result should be a work of information. If it becomes a work of art as well, the merit should be in the facts and their truthful presentation rather than in the director's artistry. It is essential, of course, that everything heard and seen should be historically accurate, and implied in every shot should be the fact that human nature has changed little but human conduct much.

Simple realism should be the criterion even to the extent of introducing the dirt and the crudity of manners where they existed and of making certain kings speak a mixture of Norman French and pidgin English. No romanticised version of the past should be contemplated, and if real persons like Queen Elizabeth are to appear, the last person to be invited to play such a part should be the conventional film actress, whose face generally bears no sign of any real experience of life.

Some idea of the serious consequences of inaccuracy of detail can be gained by reading the criticism of *THE FLAG* given in the last issue of

From *STRANGER'S RETURN*. (Vidor M-G-M.)

this journal. This picture was written and produced by one of our most sensitive and careful directors. It moreover had the approval of the Historical Association and yet, if the criticism is justified, *THE FLAG* may become an item of popular entertainment but no discriminating teacher will introduce it into the class-room.

It is obvious that, since the screen is inherently a realm of physical action and drama the essence of its nature, much of what is contained in the secondary school syllabus is unsuitable material. Much political and almost all constitutional history will still depend entirely on literary exposition.

It is in the spheres of social and economic history that films will render the best service and in these two spheres the text book often fails. To take only two instances at random, no words or static diagrams can adequately describe the working of the manorial system or the mechanical processes which make up so much of the Industrial Revolution.

The Commission's Report offers a suggestion for the first experimental film, the various methods of transport during the ages. Another subject might be proposed, based on the facts that the film is more effective with younger children, that such children generally study the earlier periods and that the more remote the epoch the fewer susceptibilities are likely to be offended at the outset. Let it be a film of the every day life of every man, a film of social types rather than actual personalities. Let it have one simple theme running throughout with implications extending into every grade of society. Let it begin with a hand significantly making an entry in what is now called the Domesday Book.





# THE FILM IN VETERINARY EDUCATION

By Professor Sir Frederick T. G. Hobday, C.M.G., Dr. Med. Vet. (Zurich), F.R.C.V.S., F.R.S.E., Hon. Veterinary Surgeon to H.M. The King. Principal, Royal Veterinary College, London.

AS in all other branches of education, there is a great scope for the film in the teaching of veterinary science. Recognising this, in 1929 the Royal Veterinary College decided to enter the film field. Accordingly one of the leading firms specialising in substandard films was approached and the matter laid before them. After discussion they agreed to make as an experiment two films illustrative of operating technique as applied to the horse. The success of these two pictures was from their first appearance so apparent that, although the College was badly crippled at the time from lack of funds, it was decided to begin, if only on a small scale, the making of films for teaching purposes.

The College accordingly invested in a camera, and work was started on the filming of clinical conditions in various animal patients, all photography being undertaken in the open. Owing to the instant popularity which these early efforts gained, it was resolved to extend the film to the animal operating theatres, and a lighting outfit made its appearance.

From the first the surgical films were an outstanding success, and to-day the Royal Veterinary College possesses a library of some forty full four-hundred foot reels of substandard films—probably the largest and most up-to-date veterinary film library in the world. The initiative shewn in going ahead in a time of acute world-wide depression was quickly recognised, and many foreign veterinarians when in this country have since requested to see some of the work which has been and is still being carried out by the Royal Veterinary College Film Department.

The value of slow-motion as applied to the filming of animals was quickly recognised, and indeed may be said in many cases to have proved of inestimable value as an aid to the teaching of the student. Many obscure cases of lameness in the horse, for example, readily yield up their secrets when shewn on the screen in slow-motion, whereas when viewed by the untrained eye alone there may exist no apparent defect in gait. So marked is this, that in some cases an accuracy of diagnosis has been attained by viewing a slow-motion film of a patient when ocular inspection alone failed to reveal where the trouble really lay. Another point which has to be borne in mind is that it is not always possible to produce, just when required for a lecture or series of lectures in the teaching curriculum, an adequate number of horses demonstrative of particular types of unsoundness. Here again, the film comes as an invaluable aid to the instructor.

In like manner the usefulness of the film made over the operating table by artificial light is at once apparent. It can readily be understood that during his five years of training the embryo veterinary surgeon cannot have the opportunity of witnessing the operative techniques employed to alleviate every diseased condition of every type of animal. In the London College records were first undertaken of the commoner operations, and nowadays when any case requiring exceptional treatment, either clinically or surgically, arrives in the hospital a film record is invariably made of such treatment.

Films have played no small part in the appeal which has been launched to raise the necessary funds to rebuild and endow the Royal Veterinary College. One reel shewing the dilapidated conditions of the buildings, and two others, specially designed to bring before lay audiences, both young and old, the work that the College does to benefit them, were put in hand in 1930. These three films have been shewn at many institutions both in London and the provinces and have proved very successful adjuncts to the business of money-raising. In fact, at a certain girl's school where a lecture and film display took place, these three films produced over £100 for about thirty minutes' run.

As regards the sound film, no active steps have yet been taken to instal the necessary apparatus, although a close watch is being maintained on the almost daily developments which are taking place in this field. So far as veterinary films are concerned, simultaneous recording is, apart from being unnecessary, almost impracticable. What is really required is some form of synchronised running commentary, preferably sound-on-disc, inexpensive in so far as the recording is concerned; for it must be realised that the actual market of veterinary films is limited.

It must not be forgotten, however, that they have a potent interest for the farmer and others connected with animal husbandry. They have already proved of exceptional value for demonstrating to the medical profession the close affinity which exists between the diseases of animals and man, many of which are intercommunicable. In our own case we have several films illustrating the same disease as it shews itself on the animal and human patient respectively.

In conclusion it may legitimately be claimed that there is a wonderful future for the film in the veterinary, and indeed in any other, sphere where animals are concerned.



# INSTRUCTION IN CINEMATOGRAPHY

A COURSE HELD AT THE POLYTECHNIC, LONDON, UNDER  
THE AUSPICES OF THE BRITISH KINEMATOGRAPH SOCIETY

EARLY in the year 1932, a deputation of officials of the B.K.S., called upon the Director of Education at the London Polytechnic to explore with him the possibilities of arranging a course of instruction to suit the requirements of the industry.

After some two or three meetings, a draft scheme was prepared and an advisory committee brought into being. This committee consists of two panels: one to represent the industry and the other the teaching interests and the governing body of the Polytechnic. The full list of members reads: President, Mr. S. Rowson, Members of Executive, Mr. L. Eveleigh, Captain P. Kimberley, O.B.E., Mr. A. S. Newman, Captain J. Smith, Mr. W. Vinten, Captain A. G. D. West.

For the governing body: Sir Kynaston Studd, President of the Polytechnic; Mr. H. Swann, Mr. D. Humphrey, Director of Education, and the teaching staff, Mr. L. J. Hibbert, Mr. P. Kemp, and Mr. B. L. Worsnop.

The course is arranged to cover a period of two years tuition and deals with photography as the primary subject; it includes chemistry, physics, architectural design, electricity and magnetism, and A.C. current work at radio and audio frequencies.

At the present moment the students have completed their first year of study and are now embarked upon the second, advanced treatment of the many subjects that the film technician of today has to master. In the past, and to a certain extent in the present, the technical side of the film industry has suffered from too great a specialisation of its workers. It is obvious that the work of a director is not only made easier but more efficient if he can understand the technical difficulties of his scenario requirements and in addition realises the strength of each process as well as its limitations. Moreover, if the camera man and the sound recorder have a mutual understanding of the materials and apparatus for each other's job, the work is more likely to progress in a kindly manner and to a more satisfactory conclusion. Strict departmentalism is very good for the department but may be, and often is, very bad for the production of artistic unity in a film.

In modern production work it is necessary to make the fullest use of every means of extending the scope of the work and it is the aim of this present course to attain these ends by making for better understanding of the other man's job as well as a greater efficiency in one's own.

The work done in the first year is to be regarded as a foundation for the second. In this first year the main purpose is to acquire knowledge in the several subjects of the course; in the second year the aim is to turn this knowledge to practical account

and to correlate the various branches of information into the definite object of making talking films.

The desire to improve the product by recruiting into the industry a new type of worker has led the advisory committee to insist that all candidates for entrance to the course must have passed an approved examination in mathematics, physics, magnetism and electricity, chemistry and English of about the same standard as that of the London Matriculation.

The trade have already displayed great interest, through the B.K.S., and in addition by the provision of scholarships. The cost of tuition for the course is £50 per annum and scholarships of £50 each for the two years enable selected students to train for half fees. The generous donors of these scholarships include: Mr. Sam Harris of *The Cinema*, Mr. Isidore Ostrer, Mr. Sidney Bernstein, *Film Weekly*, The Secretary of the Gaumont-British Picture Corporation, Mr. C. M. Woolf, Mr. Oscar Deutsch and the *Kinematograph Weekly*.

## STEREOSCOPIC FILMS

At an address given to the Royal Photographic Society on October 3rd, Dr. Herbert E. Ives, who has been engaged in research at the Bell Telephone Laboratories, demonstrated a series of still pictures in stereoscopic relief, shown without the aid of viewing apparatus. One of the pictures was in colour, and it was explained that colour photography was possible by the same method used for producing the effect of relief. Stereoscopic films have already been made by Dr. Ives by projecting a special type of picture on a screen consisting of a series of glass rods. The result is that the two eyes of any member of the audience receive separate and different images from different surfaces of the rods, and these images correspond with those received by looking at a real and solid object. The difficulty as far as commercial stereoscopic films is concerned is that extreme accuracy is needed in projection.

A London hospital is testing for a period of three months a miniature stereoscopic cinema, known as the "Turville cinematographic muscle and fusion training apparatus" for the cure of squint. The apparatus is used as a peep-show, and consists of two little screens, lenses, eye-pieces, and a projector producing twin images. Mr. A. E. Turville, who demonstrated his invention at the Optical Trade Exhibition last month, claims that the eyes are gradually trained to correct fusion and that children will be sufficiently interested in this entertaining form of treatment to persevere until the cure is complete.





Marlene Dietrich in *SONG OF SONGS* (Mamouliau)

## FILMS OF THE QUARTER

By Paul Rotha

IF the films shown in London during this last quarter are taken as being representative of the movie's capabilities for story-telling, then we may well believe that theatrical cinema is failing to make the grade. No film of any stature, serious intent or outstanding technical accomplishment has lightened our screens. At the production end, England would appear to be making progress in quantity if not in quality. Germany is as good as excluded from the movie kingdom unless its nationalist propaganda epics find a showing at private gatherings. Of the many technicians who contributed to the reputation of the pre-Nazi cinema, some are fled to Budapest, some to Vienna, others are in Paris and a few have Hollywood contracts to fulfil. Production groups are taking shape at these European centres but it is as yet too early to inspect their results. In France, Clair is said to have had his new scenario rejected, while dozens of cheap music-hall movies get produced. A typical example of how dull this sort of thing can be is *Paris-Mediterranee* now showing at London's specialist cinema. Russia remains

aloof and curiously mysterious about its new sound efforts. We have still to see Pudovkin's *Deserter* and Dovjenco's *Ivan*. Thus we are left with the usual universal provider in California. For once we are mildly surprised.

Back to the wall and fighting English commercial competition, Hollywood is showing faint but none the less significant signs of quality production. Technically, I think there is no doubt that American pictures are still ahead of our native product. But, more important, some of the American companies are at long last realising the value of independent rather than mass-production and the installation of independent producers working on yearly schedules with a wide latitude of story and director assignment is likely to yield interesting results. For example, Jesse Lasky's small unit working on the Fox lot with a schedule of eight pictures a year has already broken fresh ground with the excitingly imaginative *Zoo in Budapest*, strongly recommended to all intelligent persons, the not-so-successful but ambitious *Warrior's Husband* and the much-heralded





I WAS A SPY (Victor Saville)

Power and Glory from that excellent regisseur, William K. Howard. On the Paramount lot, that old stager Schulberg has lent his power to such an admirable picture as *Three-Cornered Moon*, notable for its sincere attempt to bear some semblance to current existence.

Of other American pictures, Vidor's *Stranger's Return* continues in the style of *State Fair*, and despite its lapses is to be welcomed, because again it tries to deal with real instead of artificial persons. Usually the song-and-dance movie drives me to hat-searching after the first reel, but Warner's *42nd Street* is a notable exception. Elsewhere I have said that it is far and away the best picture of its type to come from Hollywood and after a re-viewing I endorse that opinion. Beneath its stamp-dancing and jingle-tunes there flows an under-current of sincerity. Its script punches straight from the shoulder. No show-numbers are permitted to side-track the main theme and the whole environment of show-life is admirably felt. I commend especially Warner Baxter's central performance as the producer. Rouben Mamoulian I have always regarded as a craftsman, more theatre than film minded, but capable of turning out sensitive celluloid that is no insult. *Applause* and *City Streets* were commendable; *Love Me Tonight* and *Jekyll and Hyde* had their stylish points. But the new *Song of Songs* has nothing save the glamour of a fading Dietrich and the sometimes lovely photography of Victor Milner, who shares the photographic honours of the quarter with Lee Garmes' work in *Zoo in Budapest*. Mamoulian has obviously

spent a great deal of money and can show little for it. Of the last star final from M-G-M., *Dinner at Eight*, I have little to note. If you like your favourite stars in bushels, then nothing will stop you from bolstering up this crazy attempt to keep the old star-system from falling down. It has no permanent value.

Among the British films, Saville's *I was a Spy* stands out for its importance as Gaumont's second serious opus after the successful *Rome Express*. Personally I do not care to recommend any picture which glorifies espionage nor which lavishes so much money on ineffectual results. Technically, it fails to live up to the polished finish acquired by *Rome Express* but again displays the skilled playing of Veidt in a worthless part. The usual line-up of comedies has appeared throughout the quarter but happily I have neither the time nor space to sort them out. No doubt they are whiling away some wasted time for shallow minds which, I suppose, is their objective.

#### OTHER FILMS OF THE QUARTER

*Hell Below*. Despite the inaccuracies, nervous breakdowns and amorous pursuits, the submarine reconstruction scenes make this worthwhile seeing. The United States services are again conspicuous in their assistance to film companies, realising the value of the resulting propaganda.

*King Kong*. Interesting if only for its mechanical trickeries. The suspense-values are well worked up in the approved manner but, as in *Frankenstein*, our sympathies are all with the monster. Far from auguring a new era in film methods, the Kong Kontrivances represent another of the last efforts to stimulate public interest.

*Orders is Orders*. Out of an orgy of supposedly funny comedies, here is one that will amuse. Charlotte Greenwood and James Gleason put across their cracks in good style, while the picture as a whole is a grand social document on military and movie methods. Undoubtedly good healthy entertainment.

*Tugboat Annie*. Beery and Dressler in a rehash of *Min and Bill*; but these two troupers are worthy of better stuff. The repetition of situations becomes boring, and Beery gets drunk so many times that you lose count. Mervyn LeRoy directs but is wasted on this stuff.

*The Working Man*. For Arliss fans only. They may perhaps forgive the absurdities. It will be hugely popular.

*Reunion in Vienna*. Psycho-analysis in the well-known M-G-M tabloid form. It all means nothing as soon as you have left the ice-cooled theatre, but might occupy your attention while there. Diana Wynyard behaves creditably but John Barrymore demonstrates just how bad an actor he can be.

*Midnight Mary*. Slick direction by William Wellman and the lovely countenance of Loretta Young contrive to put across a rather familiar crook melodrama. There is a nice intimacy about some scenes that makes you sigh for better material.

*Bitter Sweet*. A Herbert (Director of Productions) Wilcox picture that adapts straight from the stage. It will perhaps please persons of easy going taste but will irritate the more educated. The good quality of Fred Young's photography makes the celluloid sweet to look at, but the extravagance of production leaves the taste bitter.

*Turn Back the Clock*. The live-wire Tracy fellow enlightened with some nice abstract sequences. It holds well during screen time but will not make a hang-over impression.

*Gabriel over the White House*. Hollywood keeps abreast of world affairs. The argument is delightfully naive but put across with a forceful swing. Certain passages are very well directed and Walter Huston's performance quite in the tradition of this excellent actor.



# RECORDS OF THE QUARTER

By T. L. MacDonald

## ON PROGRESS

Is the disc record dead? Has radio slain its rival? How many confident affirmatives one has heard, especially from across the Atlantic! But even America is not quite so sure now. It really depends on progress in the disc itself. Try a little experiment. Get someone to play over H.M.V. DA1316, which is Chopin's great polonaise played by Levitzki; then try a version which we thought very fine a couple of years ago, such as Giesecking's. Which of them comes off? (And yet I don't think you will have any faults to find with Giesecking's performance!). Try also the first record of a new pianist, Eileen Joyce, issued by Parlophone (E11237) in September; the two Etudes de Concert (Liszt and de Schlozer) are unusually well adapted to reveal the improved realism of modern recording; this, by the way, is the first Parlophone record to reach me for review in these columns; and is by general consent one of the outstanding records of the quarter. In orchestral recording, the improvement in individualised instrumental timbre, especially in bass, is quite marked. One has already remarked on this development, which is an essential one for educational use. It was well marked in Beecham's delightful record, *La Scala di Seta* overture of Rossini and Entry of the Queen of Sheba (Händel's Solomon), Col. LX255, which should also be heard and compared with really good recordings of the past. Try also any selection from the new Columbia Fifth Symphony (Weingartner and London Philharmonic) and note the range of effective control. Then hear an example of the most difficult of all recording propositions, the grand organ—the first record of the B.B.C. organ, H.M.V. C2590. You may have criticisms; but compare the recording with the best of Polydor records of Sittard, or with the Columbia Commettes (French). The fact is that not only is recording far in advance of previous work; but whereas in the past one had to recommend Victor for orchestra, Polydor for piano, and other foreign issues, the best records I hear are being made in Britain now.

## MUSIC AND THE SCHOOL

The Board of Education's Pamphlet No. 5, on school music, is doubtless fresh in teachers' minds, with its quite emphatic recommendations as to the use of the gramophone. Some current records form a timely footnote. H.M.V. offer on two 10in. records, B4333-4, a number of items by the massed Worcester city elementary schools' choirs, some of them accompanied by Malvern Girls' College Orchestra and two examples of the work done with Worcester infants' school percussion band. Very good work; it is sufficient comment that the records have been imported into America and reviewed at length in the phonograph press there. Artistically outstanding is the first record of the choir of St. Mary's School,

Bridgnorth, Col. DB1166; the integrity of the performance is heartening; their second record has just appeared, DB1181. Another good record is Col. DB987, by the boys of St. Mary of the Angels Choir School. Another group of records meet various educational requirements. Col. DB1002-4 continue a notable series of contributions to the country dance movement; they are under the personal supervision of Mr. Douglas Kennedy. Two French tales are specially suitable for school use, not for elementary forms; but for the difficult matters of intonation, emphasis, liaison, and so on, which transform a student of French into a French speaker, they are invaluable. The speaker, M. Plocque, is admirably clear, the tales very familiar: *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* on Col. DB974; *Cendrillon* on DB975; leaflets of words are available in quantity for school use. The last International Educational Society lecture was also crushed out of last quarter's survey; a series of talks by Mr. Peter Latham on the Motives of Wagner's Ring. The sections in which the variations of a few essential motives are analysed with pianoforte illustrations are models. The lecture, No. 100, three 12in. discs, is obtainable through Columbia dealers, but not usually stocked. It should be used with the two H.M.V. records already available, in which the principal motives are played through, with a numbered key.

## SACRED RECORDS

A number of good records have come in this year, which are most conveniently grouped under this heading; though they rather illustrate the variety of recorded interests. Teachers will make a point of hearing Master Jackie Davie, whose singing of Händel is exceptionally pleasing and creditable both to himself and his teachers: H.M.V. C2582. Two fine examples of Psalm chanting can safely be recommended: Col. DX443, St. George's Chapel, Windsor; and DB993, School of English Church Music. The B.B.C. chorus has made records of the d'Erlanger setting of the Lord's Prayer, DB1154, unaccompanied; and with organ of four familiar hymns, DX451 and DB041. Col. DB948 should be remembered for the Christmas season, two famous carols by the star male chorus entitled for label purposes *The Forty Stars*; H.M.V. B4304-5 are also appropriate to that season, while B3947 contains two effective children's hymns. Of more musical consequence is a record of Franck's setting of Psalm 150 and of "Turn Back, O Man," Holst's arrangement of an ancient tune with many associations; these are on H.M.V. B4364, by the Temple Church Choir. Two choruses from the Messiah are well recorded but not quite convincing on C2548. I am not in sympathy with some of the effects on B4399, which has however some charming moments.

The records of the massed bands at the Crystal



Palace last October are really stirring (C2470-1); that of 10,000 voices at the Methodist Union Conference does not appear to me to rise to the importance of the occasion (Col. DX429). It is simply impossible to compress the full particulars of all these records into available space; as they are all standard issues, any dealer will supply titles and the rest. Paul Robeson's remarkable record of two standard hymns, "Nearer, my God, to Thee" and "There is a Green Hill," calls for special mention; the sincerity and power of the rendering are most impressive (C2517). He has also recorded two fine spirituals on B4480; he again shows himself too much of an artist to sin against their simplicity; the record replaces a previous rendering.

### VOCAL RECORDS OF THE YEAR

The re-creation of Caruso has already been referred to in these pages; a third record, H.M.V. DB1875, contains "Celeste Aida" and "Je crois entendre encore" (Bizet: the Pearl Fishers); and Caruso remains Caruso in spite of all the "second Carusos." And now Tetrizzini: "Una voce poco fa" and "Caro nome," DB1979, with all the clarity of embellishment and beauty of phrasing adorned by a more worthy accompaniment. It is a pity that the transition from new to old should occasionally be quite noticeable; one does not forget the difficulty of the task. The loveliest of current issues is Elizabeth Schumann's lieder group from Schubert—the exquisite "Du bist die Ruh'," Heidenröslein, and Spring Song; some of the words have not the usual German distinctness (DB1844). The new record of Lauritz Melchior, DB1858, is a curious issue; a reprint of his Forging Song from the Siegfried album is backed by a Prize Song which rather marks the singer's limitations. DB1790 is among the year's finest operatic records, Gigli and Giannini in the great tenor and soprano duet from *Cavalleria Rusticana*; besides which Gigli records Turiddu's Farewell on DB1902, with the Neapolitan air Santa Lucia; two more Neapolitans on DA1292; "Una Furtiva Lagrima" and a thoroughly worth-while Händel Largo on DB1901; and two sacred solos on DB1831, notably "Cujus Animam" from Rossini's *Stabat Mater*. He is in excellent form in all these; personally I prefer the latest issue, in which the famous Chant Hindou from *Sadko* is sung, as it should be, by a tenor, and with real delicacy; the Italian air which backs it is of no great consequence but shows off the voice very well: DA1307. Also note Georges Thill on Col. LB10; French singing is not always attractive to British ears, but this is a record to dispel prejudices; and the words are unusually easy to follow, in Massenet's *Elegie* and a charming air from *Fortunio*. There is also a good record of the notable Spanish tenor, Fleta, H.M.V. DA1208. Moreno's setting of Spanish words to a Brahms waltz is more successful than one anticipates; the reverse is in French, an aria from *Le Roi d'Ys*. This is already such a catalogue that I may be pardoned for degenerating still further and only mentioning Harold Williams in the four Indian

Love Lyrics, Col. DB959-60 (I don't want to hear a better set); Norman Allin (*Invictus* and the Blind Ploughman) on DB1157; Heddle Nash on DB961 (the Dream Song from *Manon*, worth hearing); Dawson in Stanford's *Songs of the Sea*, H.M.V. B4482-3; Hislop in two Scots songs, B4413, well done; Crooks in light ballads, DA1330. Derek Oldham's record of Quilter songs, B4379, is worth a special mention; and Kullman's Schubert Serenade and Ave Maria, DX435, can be recommended.

### COLUMBIA'S ABRIDGED OPERAS

Each set consists of twelve sides selected from the complete opera recordings; the six records are put up in attractive portfolio with leaflet; as the recordings are mostly from the Milan Scala series the artistes are international celebrities. The selection is good; the *Trovatore* set for example, which I have examined carefully, is a satisfying representation of the work. There should be a brisk demand for this set and the other three issued so far: *Carmen*, *Aida*, and *Butterfly*. On this system the extracts given are complete; continuity is of course broken; the alternative system, preserving continuity by abridging each air or scene, cutting all repeats, etc., is more in vogue on the continent; but the present method suits the works chosen rather better. In other cases the reverse would be the case.

### AN H.M.V. ACHIEVEMENT

The issue of *Princess Ida* in complete form rounds off the series of complete recordings of Savoy operetta. The English comic opera is as much a national genre as the zarzuela or the Viennese operette; and without exaggerating its musical importance one can be deeply grateful to H.M.V. for the preservation of a tradition which is bound to alter with the retirement of the traditional cast. The most regrettable feature is the superiority, especially in diction, of some of the older members!

### PIANOFORTE PROGRESS

The most notable work issued during the summer is the Liszt B Minor Sonata, H.M.V. DB1855-7, finely interpreted by Horowitz, and clearly recorded—but a rather dull work still. Two very good examples of the improved Columbia recording are DX456: Irene Scharrer in Chopin's 'Revolutionary' Etude and the Fantaisie, op. 66; and DX449: Ania Dorfmann in three Chopin *Ecosaisies* and Weber's *Rondo Brilliant*. Paderewski's Chopin on H.M.V. DB1763 scarcely attains the high standard one sets for him; and the records are really too short for a 12in. disc. Mark Hambourg continues his series of thoroughly competent if never exciting publications with the *Moonlight Sonata*, C2251-2 (the fill-up, the *Nel Cor Piu* variations, is a good piece of work), with more Chopin on C2579, Mendelssohn *Songs without Words* on B4409, two attractive waltzes on C2505, and another couple of old favourites on B4385. Poldi Mildner plays arabesques on the "Blue Danube" on C2466—rather pointless fireworks much of the way. Yvonne Arnaud's playing on C2455-6 is a charming souvenir.





WINDMILL IN BARBADOS: Basil Wright, E.M.B

## NON-FICTION FILMS

By Rewinder

**AERO-ENGINE.** Empire Marketing Board. Supervision: Grierson. Direction: Elton. Photography: Noble. 5,000 ft. Standard.

THIS is probably not the first time that such a complicated factory process as the construction of aero-engines has been attempted in the film medium, but it is undoubtedly the first occasion on which such a difficult subject has been accorded the full range of cinematic technique. Elton's picture, in fact, sets a new standard for an industrial documentary designed specially to describe an elaborate mechanical manufacture and intended for exhibition at training-colleges and other restricted showings. Apart from its specialised aim, on which an expert alone is qualified to express an opinion, the film conveys to the ordinary spectator the idea that through the superficial disorderliness of the industrial scene there can come such a magnificently constructed product as a modern aero-engine and that beneath the apparent gloom of a manufacturing district there exists still a spirit of craftsmanship capable of producing masterpieces of beauty, strength and practicability. From the opening sequence of mould preparation and aluminium pouring, through

each successive stage until the final inspection, testing and re-inspection, Elton has succeeded in expressing the highly-skilled workmanship which underlies the manufacture, so that when the concluding sequence is reached and the aeroplanes enter the cloud-world above it is of the men whose work has made this feat possible that the spectator is thinking.

The particular purpose of the film demands a restrained treatment quite different from the vivid impressionist style adopted in the industrial sequences of such a film as *Contact*. It may perhaps be called 'descriptive' rather than a creative style, and implies that the cinematic approach must be kept subservient to the strict exposition of technical facts, so that the latter may come across with the utmost clarity. For the same reason the tempo of the picture is maintained at a steady rather slow pace, inclined to give the impression that the total footage is longer than it actually is. Dramatic crises that arrive quite naturally from the material are deliberately suppressed so that explanatory facts may be grasped. Only in the final air sequence is the curb lifted and the curve of the picture rises to



an exciting end. Moreover, Elton deserves credit for his skill in keeping the engines and their component parts in the foreground of the picture and yet still retaining an interest in the workmen engaged in the process. This concentration of the camera on the process being shown is one of the predominant features of Elton's ability. As is also essential in a treatment of this mechanical kind, he has obviously been at great pains to understand the exact nature of the processes which form the material of his film. In the same way that a draughtsman draws the external likeness of a human form from his knowledge of its internal construction, so Elton approaches his material from the inside while his camera records the external shapes and actions governed by a knowledge and selection of the underlying principles. This objective approach marks a definite advance on the treatment of his earlier *Voice of the World*, which suffered from an almost too excitable impressionistic style. He still retains, if the criticism may be allowed, a tendency towards 'fancy' shots, such as shooting through a cylinder at a workman's flickering eyelid, but these mannerisms are a matter of personal taste and in this case may be forgiven in consideration of the picture as a whole. Photographically, considerable credit should be handed to Noble. There is a natural quality about the interiors which is seldom obtained in factory pictures, while the ending contains probably the finest aerial photography turned out in this country. Almost a year has elapsed since production began on *Aero-Engine*, which now awaits synchronisation, but those twelve months are fully justified when the picture unfolds.

**DAMAGED LIVES.** British Social Hygiene Council. Canadian. 10,000 ft. Standard, talking. Director: E. G. Ulmer. \* Released under special Certificate.

The management of the Coliseum prefaced the showing of this picture with a symbolical tableau. A man appears on the stage. Behind him the screen is filled with a half-portrait of the Devil—the Red Scourge. Furtively the man beckons to a woman in the wings. She glides onto the stage, falls into his arms and they sway together in a sinful kiss. The Red Scourge leers triumphantly. The kiss performed, the couple look up and see the Devil. They are terrified. What are they to do? They hang their heads and clasp each others' waists in a chaste, resigned fashion. Suddenly the screen fills with a lady dressed in flowing robes holding an illuminated crucifix. Thwarted, the Red Scourge fades out. The sinners again look up. There is hope after all. The music swells to a climax. We get a close-up of the Cross and the couple stand within the upright, golden and pure. They are saved.

Shades of Metchnikoff and Ehrlich!

Brieux's *Damaged Goods* and Upton Sinclair's *Sylvia's Marriage* are the only two important books in modern fiction which attempt to deal with the subject of venereal disease. And the omission by the growing number of socially-conscious writers to treat of this is the measure of their failure to

realise their responsibilities. Praise therefore is due to the Canadian Social Hygiene Council in sponsoring the production of this picture. It attempts to put across on the screen—a medium far more effective than literature—the horror and pitiful indecisiveness of sufferers from syphilis.

Technically, the film is only interesting in that it marks the level below which poor photography and ineffectual direction cannot sink. From the point of view of content, it is highly mischievous. The story is that of a young and idle man-about-town who 'settles down,' marries and discovers that he has contracted syphilis which unwittingly he has passed on to his wife, now pregnant. In order to impress on him the seriousness of the disease, a doctor conducts him through a venereal disease clinic, and we are shown tabetics, ulcerated legs, G.P.I. patients, secondary rashes and other cases. Both he and his wife are horrified, and are promptly given a doubtful assurance that an intensive cure may put them right in two years, also that the child would be born free from disease. After an unsuccessful attempt at suicide, they laugh and smile for they discover that life still holds Hope and Glory for them. There is an addendum to the film in the shape of a lecture by a Medical Officer of Health on the effects of syphilis and gonorrhoea on the human body and on some methods of diagnosis and cure of syphilis, but no information is offered regarding prophylactics.

Morally, the film is misleading. It suggests that the only way to avoid syphilis are by abstaining completely from alcohol, abolishing the institution of the engagement period, substituting early and instantaneous marriages, settling down, avoiding 'irregular sex relations,' or remaining continent. The public is told nothing of prophylactic methods.

The film merely piles on the agony. There is little hope given to the sufferer. On this occasion of viewing, one man was violently sick and had to be conducted out of the theatre. Save for an occasional hysterical giggle, the audience were tense and silent. Fond couples sat bolt upright in their seats, not even daring to hold hands.

The causes of the spread of venereal disease are given as irregular sex relations and prostitution. But we are not told that prostitution is an inevitable concomitant of an economic system whose existence depends on large reservoirs of unemployed. Nor are we informed that present day conventional morality has, by looking on sex as something dirty and sinful, inculcated that sense of shame which makes the victim conceal the fact that he has contracted the disease.

**CONTACT.** British Instructional Films. Directed by Paul Rotha. Four Reels, synchronised with music specially written by Clarence Raybould. Standard. Distribution: Wardour. Certificate 'U.'

The documentary as a deliberate composition on a single theme is still new to this country, and the film renter who likes to classify these "supporting features" as travelogue, publicity or instructional



will scarcely know what to make of *Contact*. There is an aeroplane which starts from somewhere, visits a number of foreign places and comes home again, but no sketch map is shown, no helpful finger tracing the route from point to point of the journey; there is humour and the human touch in the weighing of the passengers and the packing of their luggage, but where is "the hearty flow of that rapid-fire facetious commentary" which, as the trade is told, and with reason, "assures the laughs" to the interest film? Moreover, four reels is an odd length to fit into a programme, and as it lends itself to cutting as readily as might a symphony in four movements the general public is likely to be served with a lopped and disfigured version from which texture may be judged, but not the pattern of the whole.

The complete picture begins with a series of shots illustrating man's conquest of space, first by sea, then by road and rail, and now by air. The sequence is brief, but with the aid of Raybould's music, striding impressively along the sound track, it sets the measure of the picture to a vast and timeless scale. Rotha's direction rises to the stature of his subject, and invests it with dignity and a dramatic quality that has been very carefully studied, shot by shot. This leads, in the factory scenes that follow, to what the plain man will consider undue cutting about and stage management. One would like to know a little more about how an aeroplane is built than can be gathered from these baffling glimpses of screws, volt-meters and propellor blades: but once in the air all is plain sailing.

We are first shown in a lucid and altogether delightful sequence the organisation necessary to maintain this aerial contact between nations: the chain of refuelling stations and landing grounds over the world and the transport of passengers, freight and mail. Then the great machine takes off, and Rotha, ascending into regions of sun and space, gives us a series of extremely beautiful pictures whose static quality (there is very little movement to be seen from a height) is more than redeemed by the variety of angle and the resulting impression of freedom and great distances. The bird's eye view has been taken as literally as possible, and the route unfolds from new approaches; among clouds and tree-tops, water-courses and temples; herds of big game, looking from above like leaves on the surface of a pond, and thistle heads from ground level, huge and dark against the sky. Men, dwarfed by the monstrous machine, swarm over it with oil cans and spanners, or rooted to the ground stand gazing up as the aeroplane soars overhead, passing old barriers of sea and mountain and taking continents in its stride.

The direction here is so smooth and buoyant that the occasional captions are an unwelcome interruption to the rhythm. They make up for brevity in the size of their type, which is unduly insistent. Would it have been impossible to insinuate small legends on the texture of the film itself, held for a flash on a corner of the picture? These poster-like

capitals on a black ground cut up shots that are already short enough, and bring the unwilling spectator down to earth in a series of bumps merely to tell him about Karnak or to shake into his head (as if he were a Russian peasant) some simple idea about contact.

Even so, this is a welcome change from the spoken commentary, which it is impossible to weld into any congruity with the film; and the synchronisation has wisely been left to a musical accompaniment. Raybould's airy music in the clouds and grand fugues among the machinery, dovetailed to the noise of engines (and, less happily, to familiar extracts from the classics), are of the greatest interest and afford a notable example of the close relation that may exist between cinema and music.

*Contact* will not provide the teacher with a text for practical questionnaires in geography or mechanics. We are too apt to consider the film as if it were a book that tells a story or records useful facts when creative directors have shown us that it may take its place with painting and music as a medium for conscious artistic expression, whose success is measured by its power of transmitting the artist's inspiration to his public. It is by these standards that *Contact* must be judged. It is a film that every child of what will be an air-minded generation should see, and it would be an interesting experiment to let them draw their own conclusions from it without preparatory comment or explanation. They will remember something of value from it, even if it is only a confused impression of bright pictures in strange countries, powerful engines, vast spaces and a new world conquered and waiting to be explored.

**ROADWARDS.** British Independent Productions.

Director: Paul Rotha. Photography: Jack Parker. 2,200 ft. On standard and sub-standard, sound on film, sound on disc. Produced for the B.S.A. and Daimler Motor Companies.

**WHERE THE ROAD BEGINS.** Production: Steuart Films. Direction: John B. Holmes. Photography: Jimmy Rogers. 1,000 ft. Sound on film. Music by Clarence Raybould: occasional spoken comment. Produced for the Humber-Hillman Motor Company.

Too long has the advertising film been the province of the fly-by-nights of Wardour Street. They have done their best to destroy the faith of business companies in the value of advertising by film. In the past three years the Empire Marketing Board unit, now defunct, has done much to restore confidence in the business world. And here we have under review two films that will further help to restore that confidence. Both pictures are directed with intelligence and integrity and honest labour has gone to their making. These things have been rare enough in the advertising film business before. It is important to note that here we have commercial organisations making honest advertising films. Both films suffer from concessions made to the advertiser.



For instance, Rotha had to cover every process in the Daimler, Lanchester and B.S.A. works within the limits of three small reels, while Holmes had to omit the final sequences of car building in order that his film shall be perennially useful to his advertiser, in other words, so that the advertiser can add shots of the new car models each year.

Rotha's story begins in the country, shows the roads connecting the country to industry and introduces the factory as the place where the machines are made to connect the country with the town. But, more important, there is a sub-theme in the workers who build the machines, the workers behind the car. So, for the first time we have an advertising film interested in humanities. *Roadwards* is a considerable advance on Rotha's first picture *Contact*. There is more feeling for movie construction and a better handling of action within the individual shot. Unfortunately the need for covering so many stages of manufacture has given the film a snip-snap atmosphere; and the constant succession of processes, covered so briefly, leaves a confused impression. The one sequence in which Rotha has allowed himself space to construct and create, the smithy shop at B.S.A., gives a far better idea of his capabilities than the total film. This sequence is magnificent in its demoniac suggestion, the lighting is dramatic and the cutting determined. If he could only have concentrated on four aspects of the factory the film would have gained tremendously. Photographically, *Roadwards* is full of good looks; the lighting has been controlled by the director and the results are of thematic value.

Holmes's picture is a solid initial job. He has a neat sense of construction, notably the introduction of the factory from the road. But he has yet to learn the values of themes to movie work. This film has no central idea except a symphonic one, the song of the wheel. The question of the value of symphonic construction requires greater elaboration than can be attempted here. Holmes should read John Grierson's article on this subject in *Cinema Quarterly* and then ask himself what does his film create, what social issue has been determined? What is valuable about this film is the mere fact that it has tried to get away from the tour round the factory and to give the film some reason for being. Though, as has been said above, the value of a theme such as the song of the wheel is doubtful. The exterior photography has much to recommend it and Holmes has a very pleasant sense of composition. Interior photography, though, reveals that the director is not yet master of the whole bag of movie tricks. The factory processes are flat lit, in other words, all possible light has been turned on the front of the object to get the maximum amount of light. What Holmes has to learn is the dramatic possibility of lighting, where the use of only one or two lights can create an atmosphere or give the internal dramatic value of a scene. Resulting from this misuse of lighting there is too much distracting background in the factory, a fault which might well have been eliminated by less lighting, and

a lack of concentration on the significant detail of a process. The musical commentary, composed by Clarence Raybould, is completely wedded to the picture. A theme has been taken which recurs throughout the picture, binding it together, and yet interpreting the mood of the scene it is accompanying with different scoring.

Both these films are important and should be noted. Together they are a landmark in advertising film production, they pave the way for the more honest and more intelligent advertising picture.

**90° SOUTH.** The official film record of Captain Scott's expedition to the South Pole. Photography Herbert G. Ponting, F.R.P.S., F.R.G.S., F.Z.S. Distributed by New Era Standard. Commentary. Release: January 1st., 1934

No audience, be it juvenile or adult, unsophisticated or jaded, will view Mr. Ponting's *90° South* without feelings of profound admiration and amazement. The original silent film was taken, developed and printed under almost insuperable difficulties, the greater part of the technical work being carried out in a small hut on Ross Island during the four months total darkness of an Arctic winter. Mr. Ponting has since spent practically four years in modernising the film and in assembling the final sequences. The present re-issue has in addition a musical accompaniment and a descriptive commentary by Mr. Ponting.

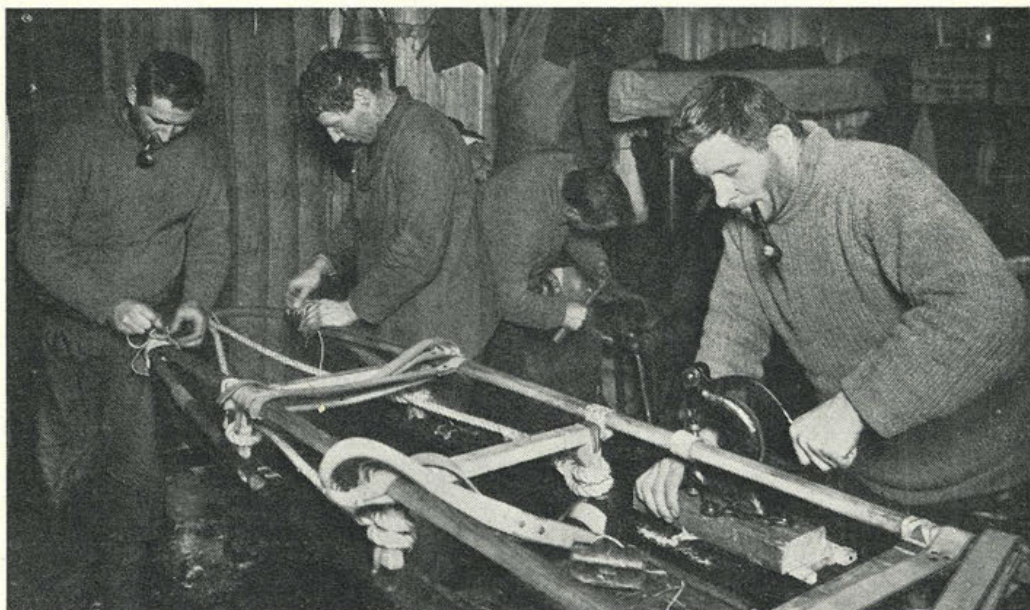
That one should not be compelled to make allowances for the incredibly difficult conditions under which the film was made speaks volumes for the technical skill and enterprise of the official photographer to the expedition. Considering the comparatively short history of cinematography as a fine art it is in itself remarkable that a film made twenty years ago, under conditions of such hardship, should be so rich in qualities which are the hall mark of the ablest film directors of to-day. Mr. Ponting combines a fine natural photographic flair with a distinct personal artistic craftsmanship. The film, moreover, is satisfying in its sense of smoothness and fluidity—a characteristic of fine cinematography which is not always fully exploited even when the director has the full resources of a modern laboratory at his disposal.

The portion of the film which was taken at Ross Island, the headquarters of the expedition, contains some intensely interesting studies of the lives and habits of the Adélie penguins, the Weddell seals, and a record of a dramatic attack by killer whales on a young seal and its mother, both seals being rescued in the nick of time by the firing of a harpoon by members of the expedition.

Owing to the necessity for cutting transport to a minimum, Mr. Ponting and his cameras were unable to be present on the final lap of Scott's journey to the South Pole. The continuity of the last portion of the film, however, has been successfully preserved by means of the projection of a slowly moving panorama of arctic scenery of remarkable beauty, accompanied by a commentary based on Scott's



**90° SOUTH:** The film of Scott's expedition to the South Pole, by H. G. Ponting; to be released on January 1st, 1934. On the right, assembling sledges, is Petty Officer Evans, who was the first to lose his life on the expedition.—New Era.



diary which was found in his tent eight months afterwards by the search party. The grandeur of the scenery and the simple stark tale of heroism unfolded in the unpretentious words of the leader of the five who never returned, combine to produce an indelible impression of great intensity. The quality of artistic restraint so effectively employed in this part of Mr. Ponting's film is a welcome contrast to the over dramatization observable in the greater proportion of films to-day.

**WINDMILL IN BARBADOS, E.M.B.** Direction and photography: Basil Wright. Standard. Silent. One reel.

Wright has a straightforward story to tell of the sugar-grinding windmills whose sails have turned in the Atlantic winds for countless years and their gradual displacement by more up-to-date but less picturesque methods. But he has done more than this. He has brought a sense of poetic imagery to bear upon the inevitable tragedy of the old and the new, a poetic feeling that is seldom seen on the screens of everyday entertainment. There is in addition an undercurrent of sympathy for the negro worker, the sons of slaves, revealed in a sudden flash from the native labourers to a half-caste employer, grown rich on cheap labour and aping European customs and clothes. Pictorially, the picture glides forward in a series of quiet but very beautiful shots; a slow movement of camera that seems to caress the whirling sails of the mill, the chaotic bundles of sugar-cane, the creased necks of oxen, the velvet brown and white shining teeth of the negro heads. Apart from its tranquil treatment of a simple theme, the picture is an object lesson in lyrical approach and marks down Wright as a camera-poet without equal in this country.

Owing to the recent re-organisation of British Instructional Films, Ltd., and the resignation of Miss Mary Field, there has been some delay in sending a promised reply to the criticism of *The Flag* which we published in our last issue. Miss Field has, however, already joined the battle

with "Rewinder" in private, and we hope that the results will be available for the next number of *SIGHT AND SOUND*.

British Instructional Films, Ltd., are shortly issuing a new catalogue of silent and sound, 35 mm. and 16 mm. films.

#### Mr. Gordon Taylor's **POWER**

The Hon. David Watson, president of the Cambridge University Cinema Society, writes that *Power* "marks the first attempt of a film society to break away, not only from sub-standard stock but also from the type of story which, we readily admit, can be more efficiently turned out by the trade."

"Although many people have much spare time at Cambridge, the spare time of different people does not often coincide; and therefore it is difficult to get a large unit together for any length of time. Documentary is the ideal material for a university film society."

"Contrary to popular belief, there are many young men in Cambridge who will work like niggers, at work both manual and secretarial. There are also the young men with ideas, so often heard of; and these ideas are given coherent form by means of lectures and practical film work. As for material, Cambridge can provide anything from the most modern laboratories to the most ancient buildings and a beautiful countryside."

"The subject of the film *Power* presents great possibilities. Had time allowed, it would have been made a two-reeler. It is actually a one-reeler; but the subject has not been skimmed and the film flows easily from the first efforts of man to harness the winds and the waters, to the most modern developments of steam and electrical power. The film was directed by Gordon Taylor. It was written by him in conjunction with Maurice Harvey. Maurice Harvey is now directing *Pygmalion* for the society."

The society is also producing a film of the building of the vast new library at Cambridge, for which half the cost, £500,000, was given by the Rockefeller Trust. The director is Roger Colville-Wallis; on the camera are P. L. Mollison and C. D. Pegg, M.A. (the author of *Bombay Riot*).



## NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

## SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

**FILM AT HOME NEWS.** Fox Photos Ltd., 6, Tudor St., E.C.4.

A special monthly service of 16mm. newsreel, 200 ft., silent, organised by the well-known press photographers with the co-operation of *Home Movies*. The producers state that the use of substandard cameras gives them special facilities for securing exclusive pictures, and a view of their first two issues bears out their claim. The material is good, well edited, and treatment straightforward, with a lively snapshot quality; reproduction quite satisfactory. The reels are sold outright for £2 10s.; for a yearly subscription of £25 an additional "feature" reel is available. Publication on the 1st of the month; may be delayed a few days to cover events of national importance. The subjects are chosen for the value in a permanent collection as well as for their topical interest; the Braemar gathering, a close-up of Big Ben, sheep-dipping on a large scale, and a display of physical training are included in the first reels. The possibility of issuing sound reels is being considered.

**MOSS-PYM 16mm. LIBRARY.** Moss Pym, 186 Wardour St.

A hire service of one-hour programmes of mixed entertainment, with a large proportion of sport and travel subjects; on 16mm. sound on film and sound on disc, reduced from 35mm. The charge is 7s. 6d. a night, carriage not included; special terms for long contracts; with operator and sound projector the charge is £3 3s. a night. A typical programme consists of ten or more subjects, including a Californian rodeo, the Swiss Papal Guards, Madrid from the air, "A Seaside Zoo," "Police Gymnasts" and "Keeping the Doctor Away"; but reels are available dealing with one special subject, such as Paris, Holland, transport and so on. A large selection is already available.

**PUBLICITY FILMS Ltd. EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.**

Under the auspices of Cadbury Bros., Ltd., the Education Department of Publicity Films is organising free film programmes to approved audiences, with an operator and portable R.C.A. sound apparatus. The programme lasts 1½ hours and is given on 16mm. non-flam. stock, with a large screen (9ft. x 5ft.) The following pictures are shown:—

**THE NIGHT - WATCHMAN'S STORY.** Four reels, directed by Walter Creighton. The story of the rise of Cadbury's and the manufacture of cocoa and chocolate from the cultivation of cocoa on the West Coast of Africa to the packing and distribution from Bournville.

**CASTLES AND FISHER FOLK.** One reel, directed by Walter Creighton. A very beautiful film showing the remains of the Portuguese and Dutch settlements along the Gold Coast of Africa, and the primitive life of the native fishermen along the shore. The camera points out some curious contrasts between the impressive design of the 15th century architecture and the almost miniature scale in which it has been realised.

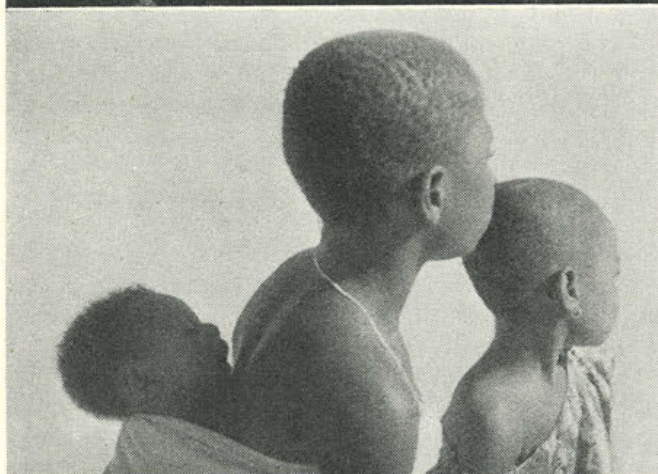
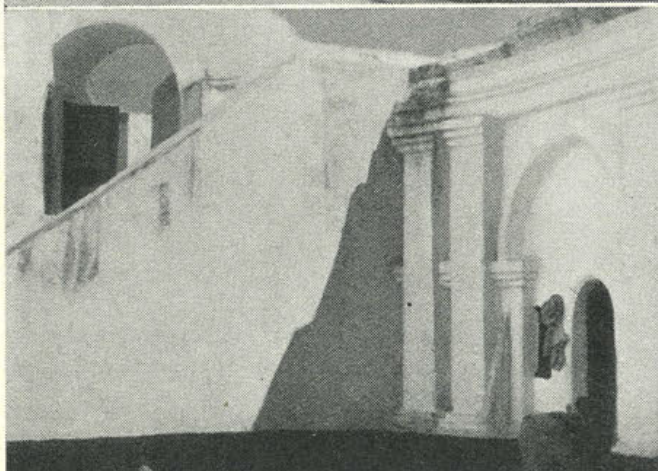
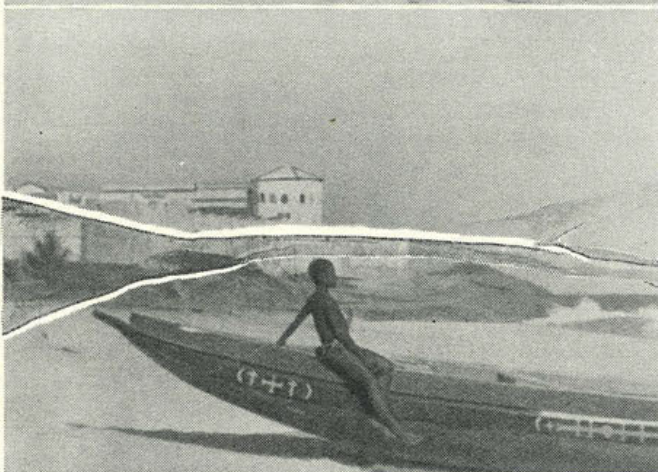
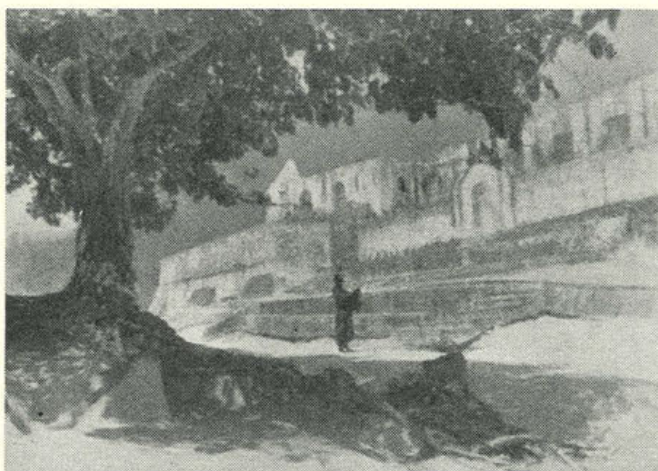
**CRYSTAL CHAMPIONS.** One reel: American sports film showing diving and swimming.

These films have been reduced from 35mm. to 16mm. stock (sound) and have a commentary and musical accompaniment. At present the circuit for this programme is restricted to Greater London, and the bookings include public and private schools, adult education centres, literary societies, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., and other educational organisations. The scheme is being extended to the provinces and possibly to unemployed audiences. A number of other important industrial firms are considering similar schemes in connection with this department.

## TRANSPORT AND NATIONAL SERVICES

**WINGS OVER AFRICA.** Beacon Film Distributing Co., Ltd.

Directed by F. Roy Tuckett, commentary, 3,878 feet, standard, certificate U. The Imperial Airways route from Croydon to Cape Town. Straightforward entertainment type of descriptive panorama, over southern Europe, Egypt, the Nile, Uganda, Kenya, Mt. Kilimanjaro, Rhodesia (with an exciting storm), big game, Cecil Rhodes' grave and Johannesburg. "Breezy commentary" by R. E. Jeffrey.



CASTLES AND FISHER FOLK: Creighton. Publicity Films, Ltd.



**WHEELS THEN AND NOW.** Austin Motors, Birmingham.  
Producers: Gee Films, Ltd. Photography: Walter Blakeley. One reel, standard, commentary. Historical retrospect of travel, from stage coach to modern car; includes changes in railway transport.

**TELEPHONE WORKERS.** Empire Marketing Board.

Directed by Stuart Legg for the General Post Office. Three reels, sound, standard. The story of the coming of the telephone service to a newly built suburb, from the point of view of the workers who made the service possible.

**THE COMING OF THE DIAL.** Empire Marketing Board.

Directed by Stuart Legg for the General Post Office. Two reels sound, standard. An explanatory film of the change over to dial telephone from the old manual system.

**GRANTON TRAWLERS.** Empire Marketing Board.

Direction, John Grierson; photography, J. D. Davidson. One reel, 1,000 ft. standard, awaiting synchronisation. The trawler *Isabella Greig* leaving Granton in heavy seas, casting nets and bringing home the catch. Sea birds and the life of the fishermen on board. Has been shown at the Ritz Picture House, Edinburgh, for the fishing communities of Granton and Newhaven, districts served by this theatre.

**CONTACT.** British Instructional. See review on page 100. See also **ENGINEERING.**

## EXPLORATION, TRAVEL AND GEOGRAPHY

**90° SOUTH.** New Era Films Ltd.

The Scott expedition. See review on page 102.

**UNCHARTED WATERS.** Empire Marketing Board.

Direction: E. H. Anstey; 4 reels; awaiting synchronisation. The Challenger Expedition in North Canadian waters along the Labrador coast.

**ESKIMO VILLAGE.** Empire Marketing Board.

Direction: E. H. Anstey. A one-reel by-product of the preceding film.

**CASTLES AND FISHER FOLK.** Publicity Films Ltd.

West Africa. See **SPECIAL PROGRAMMES.**

**WINDMILL IN BARBADOS.** Empire Marketing Board.

Direction: Basil Wright. See review on page 103.

**SAVAGE GOLD.** Pathe.

American, 4,700 ft., occasional comments and sound effects. Direction: Commander G. M. Dyott. An expedition to the Amazon River jungle; some good photography among mountains and primitive tribesmen of the jungle. A story about the search for a lost white prospector has been not too successfully grafted on to the film, but the main interest lies in the record of the well-known explorer's observations among wild life of the Amazon.

**NATURE'S CHARMS.** Austin Motors, Birmingham.

Made by Publicity Films Ltd., 1,065 ft. Photography by T. Thumwood. 35mm., commentary and music. A tour of English countryside and the efficiency of new Austin models.

**LAND OF THE SHALIMAR.** Wardour.

American, 800 ft., standard, commentary. The Vale of Kashmir, Agra, the Taj Mahal and its history.

**COSTUMES OF THE WORLD.** First National.

American, 956 ft., standard, commentary by E. M. Newman. Costumes in Sweden, Formosa, Bali. To be released on November 2nd.

**WORKERS OF THE WORLD.** First National.

American, 956 ft., standard, commentary. A Newman travel talk. Brief bird's eye view of trades and occupations.

**FIJI AND SAMOA.** Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

American, 668 ft. A James Fitzpatrick travel talk. Cannibal islands; splendid photography, adequate commentary. To be released on November 6th.

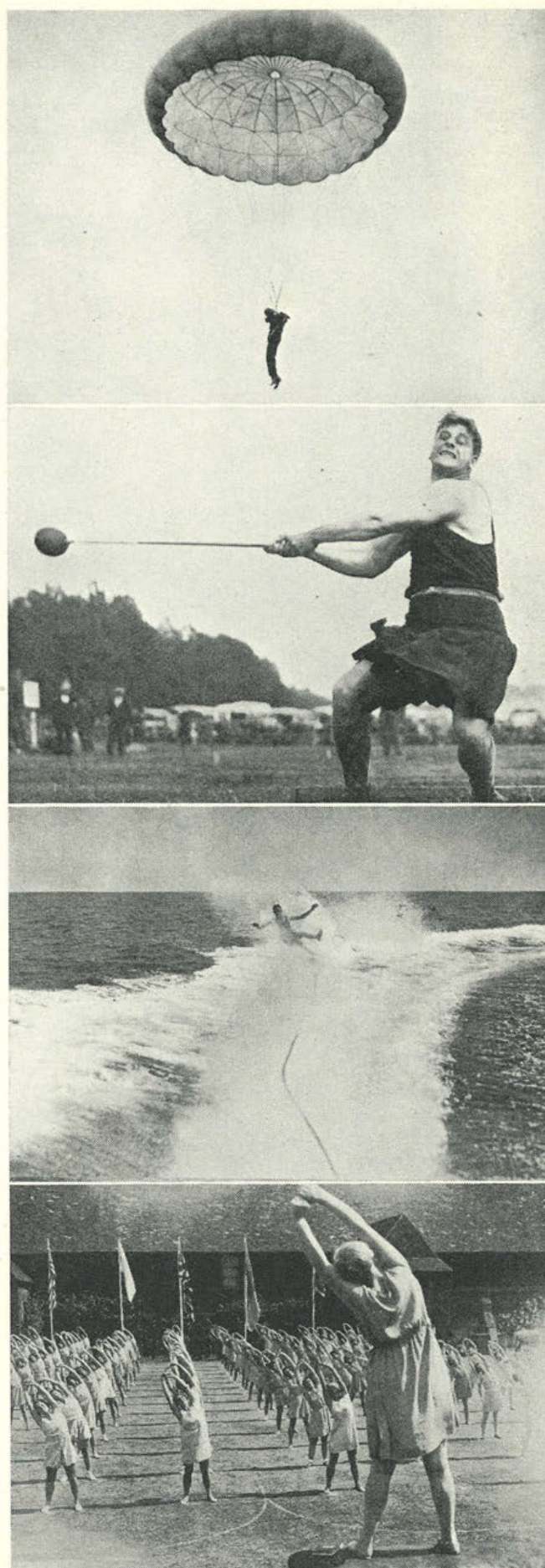
**VIENNA THE WONDERFUL.** Wardour.

American, 850 ft., standard, commentary. Architecture, streets and city types. Imaginative treatment and good camera work.

**LONDON LIFE.** Visual Education Ltd.

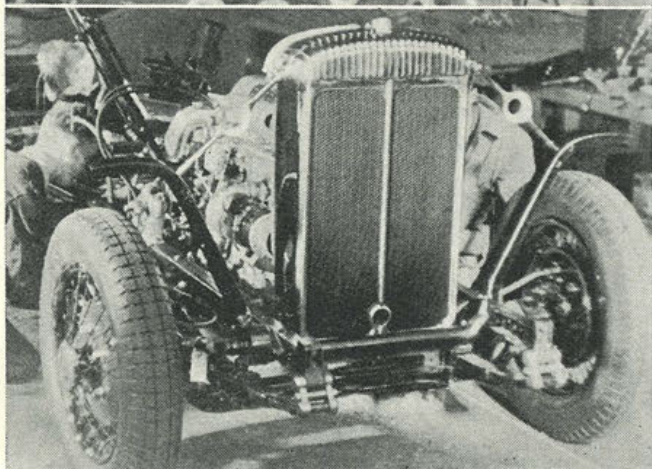
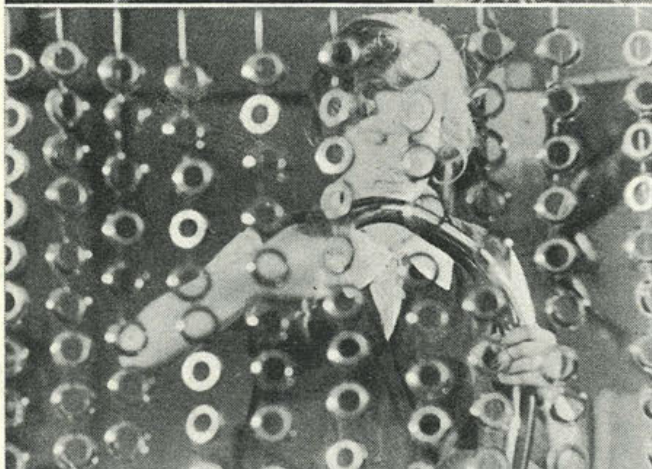
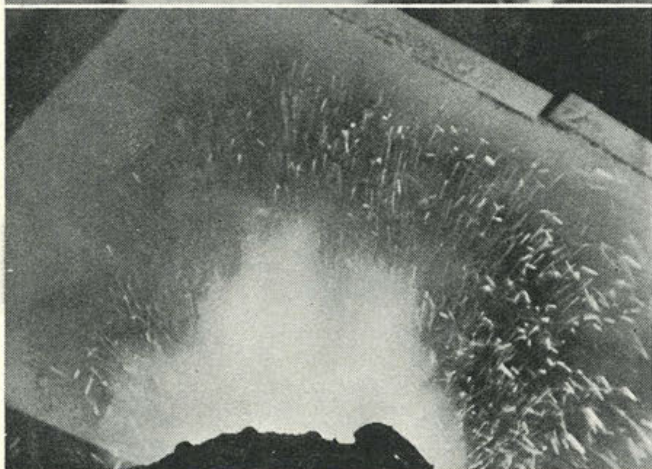
One reel (sound), commentary, standard. Aspects of everyday London life.

**SAMUEL PEPYS, TRAVELLER.** See **HISTORY.**



Sports from Fox Photos 16 mm. FILM AT HOME NEWS





ROADWARDS : Rotha, British Independent Productions, Ltd.

#### LINER CRUISING SOUTH. E.M.B.

Directed by Wright. 2 reels. Witty description of a cruise to the West Indies. Silent.

Forthcoming

Gainsborough Pictures (1928) Ltd.

A one-reel descriptive series, standard, music and commentary, directed by E. R. Thompson, on places of interest in England. Of these WINDSOR CASTLE (shown at the World Economic Gala Performance), ROYAL WINDSOR, BUCKINGHAM PALACE (state apartments) and MOTHER OF PARLIAMENT are to be released in the near future, followed by YORK, WINCHESTER, CHIPPING CAMDEN, CHESTER, LUDLOW, STOKESAY, THE NEW FOREST, SECRETS OF THE NEW FOREST, SANDWICH, SANDWICH AND RICHBOROUGH, OXFORD, CAMBRIDGE and RYE. Mr. Thompson has also made a series of one-reelers on MALTA, TANGIER, MAJORCA and ENGADINE MEMORIES, and two or three reels on Holland are in preparation.

#### AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY

##### CARGO FROM JAMAICA. E.M.B.

Directed by Basil Wright; one reel. A film of banana cultivation in the West Indies. Rewinder says: "A lyrical, almost poetical quality . . . is inherent in all Wright's work."

ME PROPER BLACK MAN. Publicity Films, Ltd.

Directed by Walter Creighton. Standard, 1,000 ft. Commentary and music. Village life of the West Coast African; soap making, the cocoa and lime harvests; trading and palm oil cultivation.

Forthcoming

LANCASHIRE. Lancashire Industrial Council.

Made by D. F. Taylor of the E.M.B. Film Unit for the Travel and Industrial Development Association of Great Britain and Ireland. Four reels, with commentary. The factors that have contributed to Lancashire's prosperity in the past—climate, water supply for the cotton industry; and how the county is adapting itself to new trades—glass manufacture, engineering, ship building, wireless and others.

LONDON. Travel and Industrial Development Association.

A two reel standard film, awaiting synchronization, by Miss Grierson. An impression of London as a centre and magnet of national life—industry, finance, politics, social and recreational activity.

C.W.S. A general 35mm. talking film, dealing with the activities of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, Ltd., is in preparation by Publicity Films Ltd., and will show the working of the C.W.S. from the members of the board, the organisation of committees and glimpses of various factories.

#### NATURAL HISTORY

TAMING THE JUNGLE. Equity.

American, 5,215 ft., standard, commentary. Direction: Bob and John Tansy. A detailed account of the training process for lions, tigers, pumas and leopards; feeding time; gaining confidence, and learning tricks.

SAVAGE GOLD. Pathe. See EXPLORATION.

This film contains some interesting sequences on the animal life of the Amazon River—tapirs, honey bears, birds and strange insects.

ELEPHANT TRAILS. Fox Films Ltd.

American, 800 ft. In the Magic Carpet series; elephants hauling and piling teak and on holiday in their native jungle.

#### ENGINEERING AND MECHANICS

ROADWARDS. British Independent Productions Ltd.

Manufacture of Daimler and B.S.A. cars. See review p. 101.

WHERE THE ROAD BEGINS. Steuart Films Ltd.

Humber and Hillman cars. See review on page 101.

BUILDING BRITAIN'S DEPENDABLE CAR. Austin Motors.

Producers: Gee Films, Ltd. Photography: Walter Blakeley. 3 reels, 2,700 ft., standard, commentary, manufacture, assembly and despatch of Austin cars. Main item in the new Austin publicity programme WHEELS ONWARD.

TALBOT MOTORS. Talbot Motor Works, Barlby Rd., W.10.

Fox Photos Ltd. have undertaken a 16mm. silent film, 800 ft. (40 minutes approx.) showing manufacturing processes.



**AERO-ENGINE.** E.M.B. Direction: Elton. See review on page 99.

**CONTACT.** B.I.P. One reel of this film deals with the manufacture of aeroplanes. See review on page 100.

**POWER.** Visual Education Ltd.

Produced by the Cambridge University Film Society, Director, Gordon Taylor, 1,000 ft., standard, commentary. The forces of Nature and their control by man; harnessing horses, water, steam, electricity.

**ELECTRICITY.** Education Department, G.B. Equipments Ltd.

Directed by Dr. Geoffrey Martin. Two reels, 16mm. sound on film (reduced from 35mm.) The first of a series of 20 film lessons in electricity, covering a three years course. Begins with elementary principles and will include the laws of induction, alternating current, the telephone, the dynamo, motors, electro-magnetic waves and wireless. Other projected series are to deal with heat, light, optics, mechanics and higher mathematics. The charge for hiring will probably be in the neighbourhood of 5s. a night, carriage paid one way.

## HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

**THE FORUMS OF IMPERIAL ROME.** Radio Films Ltd.

Italian, 970 ft., standard, commentary. To be released November 6th. Fine photography among the remains of Roman temples and theatres; commentary informative.

**SAMUEL PEPYS, TRAVELLER.** Visual Education Ltd.

Direction and photography, Eric Spear. One reel sound, commentary, or two reels silent; standard. A tour of the places visited by Pepys and mentioned in his diary in London, Oxford, Cambridge, Bampton, Salisbury; accompanied by music of the period.

**THE HIGHWAY.** Visual Education Ltd.

Direction by Eric Spear and Christopher Radley; photography by Eric Spear. Standard; two reels sound, dialogue and music, or two reels silent. Watling Street through the centuries; Roman and mediaeval sites and busy present day scenes along the road.

## MEDICAL AND SOCIAL HYGIENE

**DAMAGED LIVES.** British Social Hygiene Council.

See review on page 100. A large part of this film deals with the clinical treatment of venereal disease, and may therefore be considered as documentary.

**A CENTURY OF PROGRESS.** King Edward's Hospital Fund

Standard, 1,090 ft., dialogue. A 16mm. edition is being considered for the Western Electric Library. Produced by Gaumont. Introduction by the late Viscount Burnham, followed by two contrasted scenes illustrating the progress made in hospital work during the last hundred years. A street accident in 1833 shows the rough and ready treatment of the patient by the local apothecary and the result of an operation without anaesthetics. The victim leaves on crutches, a cripple for life after paying a fee he can barely afford. A similar accident in 1933 shows the arrival of an ambulance, preparations at the hospital X-ray examination, the operating theatre, and the return of the patient with mended limb. Other activities of a modern hospital—massage, maternity, children's ward, one shown, and pictures of the Prince of Wales, Queen Alexandra and other past and present members of the Royal Family.

## MUSIC AND ART

**MUSIC MASTERS.** Butcher's Film Service Ltd.

One reel sound, standard films, showing incidents in the lives of famous composers, to an accompaniment of their most popular works. The latest in the series are **HANDEL**, **BEETHOVEN** and **CHOPIN**.

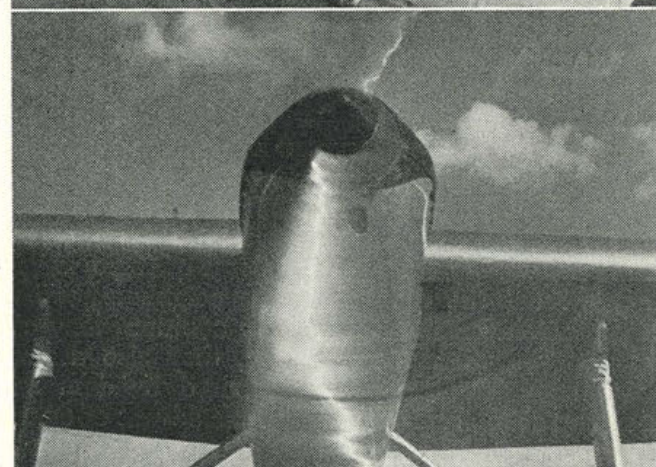
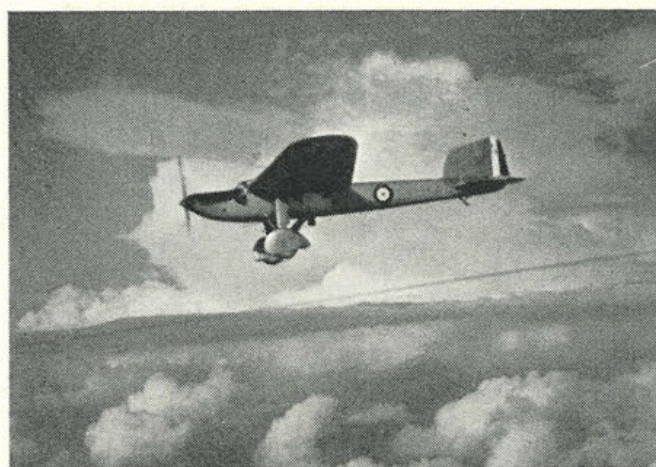
**WINDSOR AND NEWTON LTD.**

A series of three 16mm. films, 400 ft., silent, is being prepared for Messrs. Windsor and Newton by Fox Photos Ltd. They will deal with colour processes, stencil cutting and other subjects in connection with the firm's educational work.

## RELIGION

**IN OUR TIME.** David Mackane Productions Ltd., 3, Leicester Street, London, W.C.2.

Directed by T. Aveling Ginever. Standard, dialogue, music, two reels. Important as the first serious attempt to use popular cinema as direct religious propaganda.



AERO-ENGINE: Elton.

Empire Marketing Board.



## TECHNICAL AND TRADE REVIEWS

## THE FILM IN THE MAKING

## III—SOME PROBLEMS IN TALKIE CAMERA STRUCTURE

By George W. Pocknall

THE introduction of "talkies" brought with it many new requirements in way of equipment. The sound recording and the reproducing side advanced in technical perfection by leaps and bounds; but not so the cameras, and although it is now a matter of five years since talkies were really launched, the progress in camera design is far behind that of recording and reproducing, and it is only within the last twelve months that concrete signs have appeared that the camera-makers are really getting down to brass tacks, breaking away from the existing camera and "blimp" arrangement and concentrating on the production of a camera specially designed for the making of talkies.

The first effort in silencing cameras, or rather in preventing camera noise from reaching the microphone took the form of a booth. This was a sound-proof cabinet on wheels, to a very slight extent mobile, with a glass front. At the best it was only a make-shift and, as can be imagined, removed at one fell sweep the real mobility of the camera. It prevented free intercourse between director and cameraman and was purgatory for the latter. The next step was to house the camera in what was and is known as a "blimp." This was a sound-proof box, constructed of various materials, including wood, lead, other metals, sorbo rubber, felt and rock wool. The blimp was a definite advance on the booth, but at the best blimps are heavy, unwieldy contraptions, some of them weighing, without the camera, in the neighbourhood of two hundredweights; and as, in addition, they call for heavy stand and run-trucks, they also destroy to a large extent the much desired freedom and mobility of the camera. Before the advent of talkies a very wonderful camera technique had been built up, and striking and helpful camera angles had become a study with directors, cameramen and scenario writers. This art had to be largely abandoned owing to the difficulties attendant on the placing of the camera and its huge mass of blimp. The problem of reviving to its fullest extent the art of camera angles will not be solved until the camera-makers produce a camera sufficiently silent to allow them to dispense with the blimp and with approximately the same mobility as the pre-talkie apparatus.

It is only fair to say that at no time in the past history of English film production has the industry been sufficiently large to enable the camera-makers to lay down expensive plant and precision tools for the manufacture of new models. It would obviously not be a commercial proposition, if the best they could

hope for was the selling of between forty or fifty cameras, and I have always felt that this was the reason that English cameras have never held a leading position in the film world. In the face of this statement it is the more gratifying to be able to say that one of the best efforts towards producing a camera specially for talkies is the work and design of an English maker. I refer to the Vinten camera; a machine which is steadily meeting with increased and deserved appreciation. The latest model, which I have had an opportunity of examining, is really a very fine piece of work, embodying many valuable features. It is of conventional design, with outside magazines and revolving lens turret. The film shift mechanism is of the reciprocating pin type and incorporates a very efficient register pin system, which ensures the steadiness of the negative. The gate is of the non-pressure type and provides an extremely long controlled travel for the film. The method of focussing is very ingenious, the entire gate, with film *in situ*, being moved aside, bringing into position a ground glass screen to take the actual place of the film aperture. One is therefore able to focus and compose one's picture in the actual taking aperture. When the gate is in the focussing position the camera is rendered inoperative, preventing damage to the claw mechanism and, more important still, preventing the possibility of shooting and getting nothing on the film. An additional refinement, which to my knowledge no other camera possesses, is an automatic shutter dissolve which is best described as a constant speed fade. This gives the predetermined length of fade irrespective of the shutter aperture at the beginning of the fade; if the cameraman wants a fade of four feet, he gets four feet, no matter whether he began fading with a shutter aperture of 170 degrees or 5 degrees. The mechanism is operative either forward or reverse, and fades of any length may be obtained by hand, the automatic fade giving a choice of four or eight feet. The new camera is much improved with regard to silence and its new blimp is an extremely light one, not to be compared with the weighty and unwieldy affairs known to-day as blimps.

One other camera, built exclusively for talkies, is worthy of mention. This is the Eclair, a French camera that is as yet scarcely known in this country. This machine is fitted with a revolving lens turret, with the added advantage that focussing is controlled from the back; the lenses themselves are not mounted in focussing mounts, as is the usual custom, but the turret itself moves in and out.



These are the two outstanding features of this camera: first, the machine requires no blimp, the body being so constructed that no noise is transmitted to the outside, a feature all the more astonishing when the second is considered—that the camera is designed to take simultaneously (on separate films, of course) both the picture and the sound-record negative; this entails two complete mechanisms housed in one body. To do this and to produce a machine that requires no blimp is indeed an achievement. The camera is naturally far more mobile and adaptable to difficult angles than those which need the usual blimp of enormous weight. The camera is of exquisite workmanship and finish, essentially French in its beauty of design and construction, but perhaps if anything rather mechanically light for the arduous and sometimes brutal treatment handed out to the present-day talkie camera outfit.

A camera very much used in this country by producers of talking pictures is the Mitchell, an American machine of very sound construction, capable of giving the best results and good service under hard conditions; it is, nevertheless a camera not made for talkies but rather converted to their special requirements, and, again, this camera demands the use of a large and heavy blimp. The machine is of the turret type, with outside magazines. For focussing it uses the method of sliding the entire body on a specially designed base, bringing a ground glass screen to the exact position occupied by the taking aperture. This method has proved itself both quick and reliable and the optical system for magnifying the picture on the ground glass leaves nothing to be desired.

The well-known firm of Debie have also endeavoured to produce a camera that will give a good account of itself under the exacting conditions demanded, and they have undoubtedly succeeded; but here again the makers have concentrated on conversion rather than new construction. The mechanism is identical with that of the very familiar Debie camera of the days of silent films, which enjoyed an enviable reputation owing to its extreme compactness and portability. The Debie talkie camera is housed in a very ingenious and convenient blimp, which allows of ready access to the camera within, and the outside camera controls are cleverly arranged and convenient in use.

Continuing this series on THE FILM IN THE MAKING, the winter issue of SIGHT AND SOUND will contain an illustrated section on some of the most important cameras in use for professional cinematography today.

## NON-REVERSAL STOCK FOR SUB-STANDARD FILMS

To the Editor

Sir,—Sir D'Arcy Power in his article *Films in Surgery* which appeared in the summer number of SIGHT AND SOUND stresses the important uses to which substandard cinematography could be put in the medical profession.

He mentions that a library of films would be of greater use to a young surgeon who has recently qualified than a hasty inspection of rough drawings and text books—for besides its excellent teaching qualities, such a library would form a

more accurate work of reference when he has started in practice and has to perform some delicate and immediate operation for the first time not under supervision and possibly without skilled assistance. He would obtain more confidence from the three minute running of 100 ft. of 16 mm. film, showing the performing of a similar operation by some skilled surgeon, than by hours of intensive study of his notes or text books.

In demonstrating the fact that the increased use of films in surgery is almost essential, Sir D'Arcy Power states that "two difficulties stand in the way—(1) the cost, (2) the wear and tear of the films."

These difficulties may be apparent with "reversal" film, in which there is no separate negative, but are to a large extent smoothed out by the use of the "non-reversal" process in which there is both a separate negative and a separate print for projection. In this latter method the initial cost of stock in preparing the film is appreciably reduced, while it is by no means as expensive to obtain further copies when one's projection print is too badly worn and scratched to permit of further use.

In considering the cost of the film, reference is made, for the purpose of his article, only to the stock and not to any medical or other fees which are involved.

A really great saving is effected by the facility for having the negative developed only. Remember that even the best cameraman cannot always expose a spool of film so that there is no wastage after editing. How much more waste will there be when the exposures are made by one who is less experienced? With "non-reversal" film the negative may be edited so that a positive copy of the *wanted portion alone* may be obtained, thus avoiding paying for the printing of waste film.

It may be found better to have two cameras working when the film is being taken so that a good viewpoint is obtained for all movements. This will necessitate a considerable wastage unless "non-reversal" film is used, as there will be a great amount of cutting to be done. Moreover, titles may be spliced into the negative so that the positive print for projection comes out as one complete and unjoined whole, effecting considerable saving in wear and tear.

It has been said that to offset this price consideration and other advantages "non-reversal" film shows more graininess of image in projection than does the "reversal." This in fact is not the case, and it should be remembered that this method of preparing a separate negative and positive is employed in the use of standard 35 mm. film, where there is considerably greater enlargement in projection, and any grain would be much more readily noticed.

Demonstrations by means of substandard films have definitely proved their educative value, and any methods such as the use of "non-reversal" film which tend to further its use are to be encouraged.

H. C. McHUGH

## BOOKS OF REFERENCE

- Amateur Talking Pictures and Recording.* By Bernard Brown, B.Sc. (Eng.) (Pitman 7s. 6d. net.)  
*Commercial Cinematography.* By George H. Sewell, F.A.C.I. (Pitman, 7s. 6d. net.)

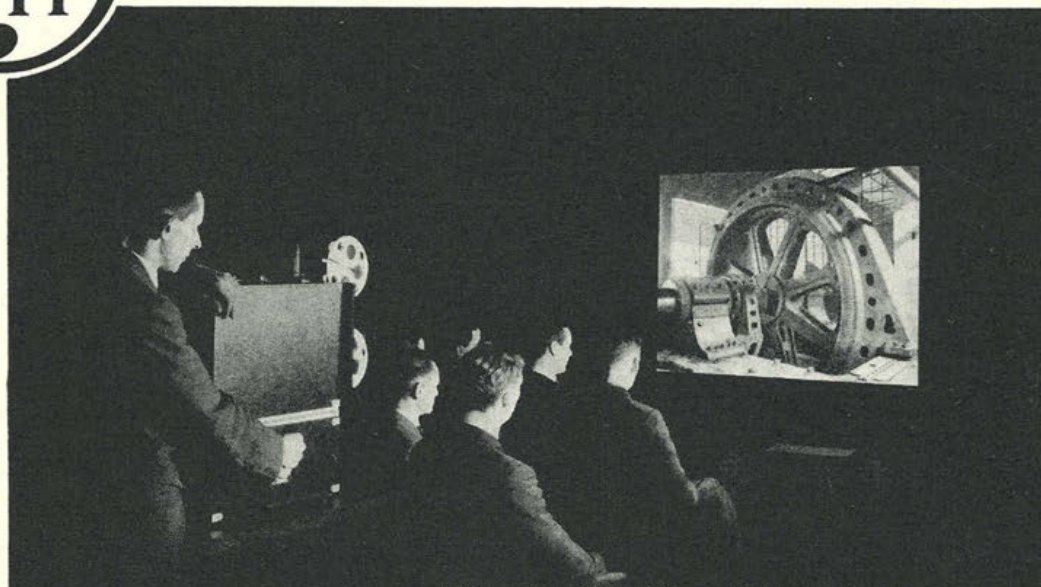
Mr. Bernard Brown compresses an enormous amount of practical information into his book and gives a very complete survey of the apparatus available to the amateur both for simple recording and for making sound films. The principles are explained in sufficient detail and the operating instructions are practical and to the point. But it is as a record of the materials which have been produced commercially for the amateur that this book is, so far as we know, unique, and long after most of the apparatus described has been superseded this record will remain of interest and value.

Mr. Sewell's book is an able guide to the use of the 16mm. camera and projector for commercial purposes and should be studied closely by educationalists considering the production of films in sub-standard sizes. This is, again, a comprehensive and practical work which will make itself indispensable to the user who regards himself as yet unskilled.



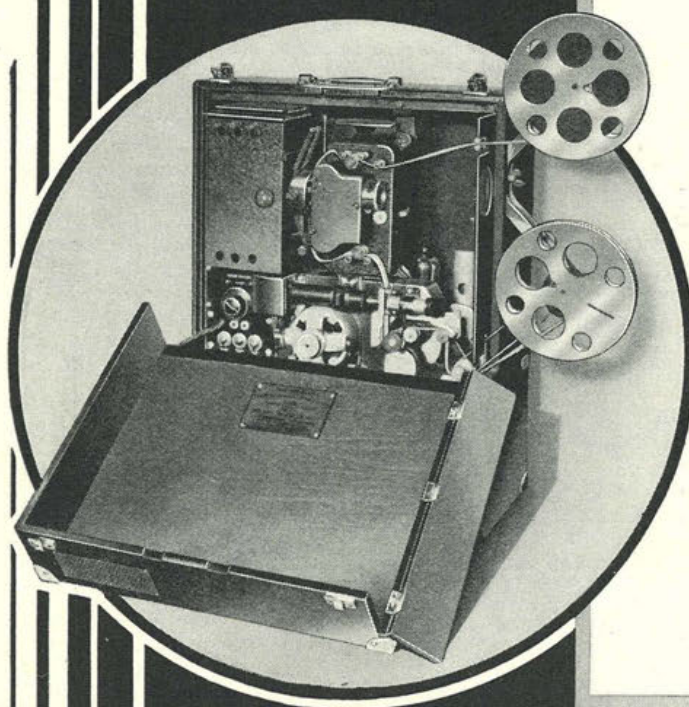


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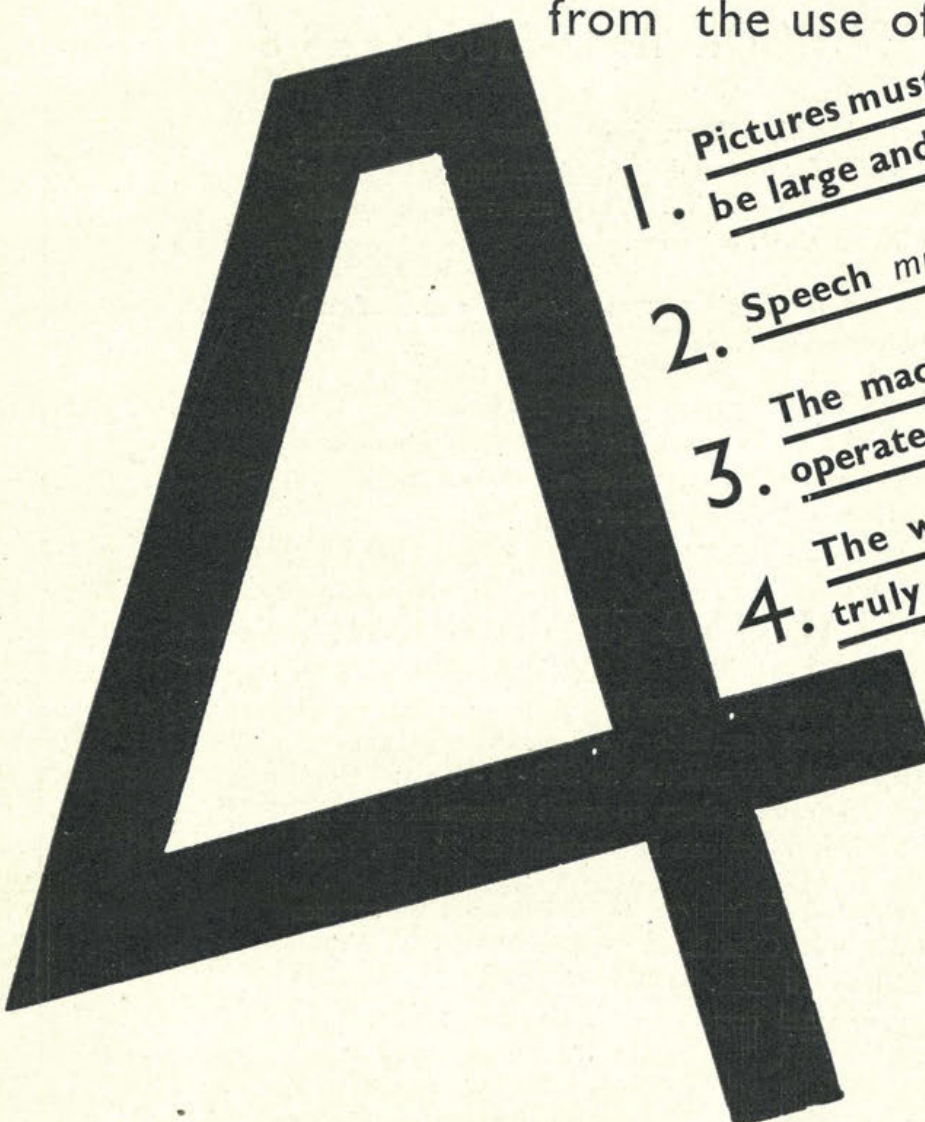
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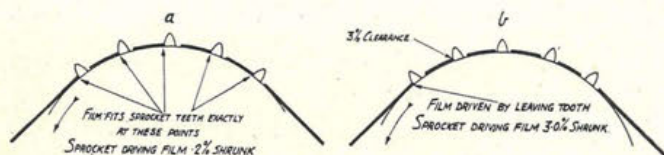
## B.T.H. 16mm. SOUND FILM REPRODUCER: Price £150 0 0

THE advantages of the use of the 16mm. film over the 35mm. film in certain spheres are well known. The 16mm. reproducer equipment is portable and can be easily and quickly erected, even by a novice, and the film is light, inexpensive and non-inflammable. With these advantages the 16mm. film is particularly suitable for use in small entertainment halls, for advertising and for instructional and educational purposes. It also makes possible the introduction of "talkies" to the smallest and most isolated hamlets and rural areas where an electric supply is available.

It was with these objects in view that the British Thomson-Houston Co., Ltd., a year or two ago, began work on an equipment to project 16mm. sound-on-film, the result being a compact apparatus that can be carried in a small car and can be erected and ready for use in a few minutes. It consists of three components—the picture and sound projector, which also incorporates the amplifier and weighs 65lb.; the loud speaker case which carries a mains unit, a complete set of spares and a number of films; and the silver screen.

The projector case contains a mute head which operates at 24 frames per second, and with the aid of a 250 watt projector lamp gives a bright, well defined and steady picture on a silver screen 5ft. wide. The sound head is carefully designed to draw the film through the gate at constant speed. The sound is produced by drawing the sound track past a narrow slit of light. The light which passes through the sound track falls on to a photo-electric cell, and thus the amount of light falling on the cell is determined by the shape of the sound track. It is clear that the speed at which the film is pulled must not vary. If it does the resulting sound will not be a faithful reproduction of the sound track. Particular attention has been paid to this by the British Thomson-Houston Company, and every precaution has been taken to prevent speed variation of the film. The reason for taking these precautions is as follows.

Fig. 1.



Suppose that a constant frequency of 2,000 cycles per second is recorded on the film; for this to be reproduced faithfully the film must move past the slit in the gate so that 2,000 peaks pass the slit in one second, and if the speed is correct this will be the case; if, however, the speed falls to one half the correct speed, the frequency of the reproduced note will be only 1,000 cycles per second. This is an exaggerated example, but it illustrates the fact that any variation in speed, whether the variation be slow or fast, will considerably affect the sound, and it is well known that the ear is able to detect a variation in frequency of 0.4 of 1 per cent.

There are two main causes for variation in speed of the film; one is a quick variation due to sprocket ripple and the other a slow variation due to the eccentricity of some moving part over which the film runs.

Sprocket ripple is due to the fact that the film is driven by means of a sprocket, the teeth of which engage in the sprocket holes punched in the film. When the film exactly fits the sprocket, the drive on the film is almost continuous, since as the film leaves one tooth the drive is immediately taken by the next tooth located in another sprocket hole, as shown in Fig. (a). This occurs when the film is new. When the film has shrunk, however (and the usual shrinkage during the life of the film is of the order of 3 per cent.), the film will not fit the sprocket, and as the film leaves one tooth there will be a short interval of time before the next

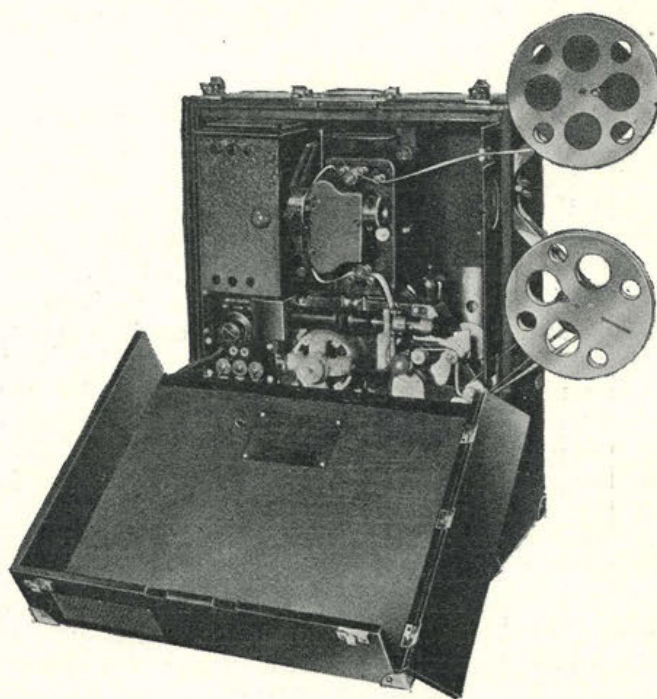


Fig. 2.

tooth takes up the drive, as shown in Fig. (b). If this stopping and starting of the film were allowed to reach the gate, the result on the sound would be disastrous. It is necessary then to incorporate a filter consisting of a spring and a flywheel. The film runs over a roller attached to the flywheel before it laps the sprocket, and the friction between the film and the roller drives the flywheel.

It is very necessary to ensure that the roller and the sprocket are not eccentric, as this would introduce a slow variation of speed. In order to incorporate a full size picture on the sound film one row of sprocket holes has been omitted, and the sound track accommodated in the space left vacant.

The all-mains amplifier, which gives an undistorted output of 3-1/2 watts, is also incorporated in the projector case. Mazda valves are used throughout and are easily accessible by opening a door at the back of the cabinet. The cabinet is covered in black rexine and measures 20" x 18" x 10". Fig. 2 shows a view of the cabinet opened ready for threading.

When the machine is operated the cabinet can be closed and the volume of sound controlled by a knob on the outside.

The loud speaker case contains a B.T.H. Senior 8" R.K. permanent magnet loud speaker. The back of the cabinet is made to accommodate all the accessories required and may be seen in Fig. 3. The silver screen can be erected in a minute, using only one hand, and when ready for transit is contained in a box 4" square by 5' 8" long. The weight is about 20 lbs. The entire equipment can be run from any 50 cycle A.C. supply, and consumes 500 watts.

It is impossible in this short space to deal fully with the methods of obtaining 16mm. sound-on-film. Most of the existing films have been reduced from standard film, a method having been developed by the B.T.H. Company whereby a straight optical reduction of the sound is made from a 35mm. negative. The standard negative and the unexposed 16mm. film are threaded on to the machine in a photographic dark room, and the machine is switched on. When the film has run through a fully exposed 16mm. positive sound track is ready to be developed. Both the printing apparatus and the reproducing apparatus are of English design and manufacture.

Since the B.T.H. 16mm. sound film equipment was first demonstrated in London, over two years ago, it has been considerably developed and now compares favourably in general results with its parent, the 35mm. cinema equipment.



## 1934 WIRELESS RECEIVERS AND RADIO-GRAMOPHONES

FOR the 1933-1934 season the manufacturers have apparently decided to "go modern" both inside and outside their sets, and ye olde Jacobean wirelesses are no more. Most of the cabinet work shows that some attempt has been made to design it specifically for the job in hand. A few examples are very good, a few are just good, and a large number have their excellent outlines spoiled by an excess of variegated inlay work.

The new season's sets represent good value for money as far as the well-known makers are concerned and those who use electrical reproduction for educational purposes can equip themselves adequately at moderate cost. Automatic volume control and the recent marked improvement in the efficiency of battery operated sets provide for schools and others in remote districts an assurance of a good constant level of performance. In a number of sets there is provision for switching off the internal loud-speaker if this is not required while an external loud speaker is in use—a valuable feature for those who appreciate the improvement in quality given by a good external loud speaker on a suitable baffle.

Modern valves have made possible the production of receivers which are compact, powerful and selective and there are several 5-valve super-heterodynes (including rectifier) of good make at 14 or 15 guineas. Those by H.M.V., Marconiphone, G.E.C. and Pye should give satisfaction.

Increases in valve efficiency are not making the work of the designer of moderately priced radio-gramophones any easier, and such an instrument should be bought by the inexperienced only after a good test in the actual place where it will be used. One purist visiting the Olympia exhibition is reported to have declared that not one instrument in the show was capable of reproducing records as they should be reproduced. While this is an exaggeration it should be realised that the gramophone side of a radio-gramophone which may give admirable reception of broadcasting often represents a compromise. With the best makers the results are good enough to satisfy most people. On the other hand, there are a number of sets on which the terminals labelled "pick-up" would be better omitted.

Where electric mains are not available a receiver or radio-gramophone embodying class B output, or the CQA output of Columbia, will give results equal to those of many mains operated receivers. The Columbia battery Radiograph is of this kind and costs 20 guineas. Film Industries, Ltd., have a battery-operated public address equipment which is stated to have an acoustic range of 500 yards.

A receiver which will appeal to specialist users and to the highly critical is the Haynes A.C. Quality Receiver. Of medium broadcasting range, it has an output of six watts, a circuit of proved efficiency and an excellent all-round performance.

All the large makers named market instruments of the 7 or 8-valve type (including rectifier). To

the discriminating buyer these probably represent the best value.

Among other makers may be mentioned Brunswick Ltd. (radio-gramophones), City Accumulator Co., Ltd. (well-made sets, some with separate loud-speakers), Bush Radio, Ltd. (range include television receiver), Ferranti, Ltd., Halford Radio, Ltd., Philips Lamps, Ltd. (non-superheterodyne sets of high efficiency), Radio Gramophone Development Co., Ltd., Tannoy Products (high power amplifiers).

## HOME RECORDING

PERMAREC; Musikon Ltd., 17, Lisle Street, W.C.2.

Mr. Will Day is sponsoring a new system of home recording which promises to be of the greatest value in music, speech and language training. Briefly, it consists of pick-up, including volume control and automatic stop; a groove-cutter and accessories and a supply of records on an aluminium base, with a special coating which is soft enough to take a deep cut from the recording needle but which hardens to an almost indestructible consistency by baking for two hours at a temperature of 80 degrees centigrade. It is cheap, efficient, lasting and quick and easy to operate. A speech record demonstrated at Lisle Street, played on an ordinary gramophone with a steel needle, gave a reproduction up to the standard of good proprietary records. Attempts to scratch the surface with a coin made no effect on the reproduction, and the record showed no signs of wear after constant use. There seems no reason to doubt that these records have a longer life than that of standard proprietary makes. They are also light and unbreakable.

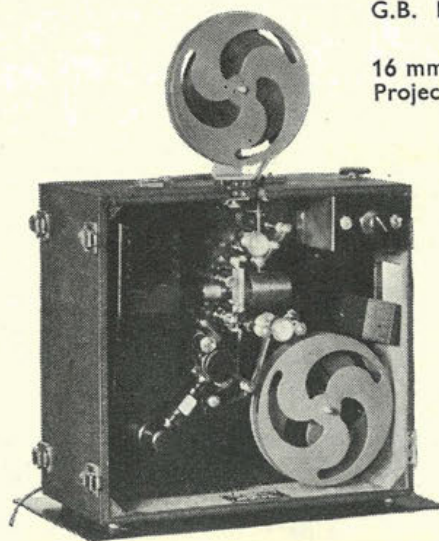
The apparatus for recording from an existing wireless set or radio-gramophone costs £6 17s. 6d.; with the addition of a G.E.C. microphone for direct recording of speech or music the price is £7 16s.; with a D.R.I. microphone £12 2s. 6d. Extra records cost 3s. each.

In addition there is a "Permarec Home Cine Synchronising Turntable" at £7 7s., which brings home talkies within easy reach of owners of a projector. A 16mm. silent film of a Cunard liner shown in Mr. Day's offices was transformed into a lively and informative talkie, with a perfectly synchronised commentary and music in the background by means of a "home-made" record reproduced from the turntable and connected by a flexible drive to the projector. With this outfit, which consists of a floating drive motor, turntable and flexible drive to the projector and pick-up, the amateur cinematographer is also able to record sound during the actual taking of his own films.

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